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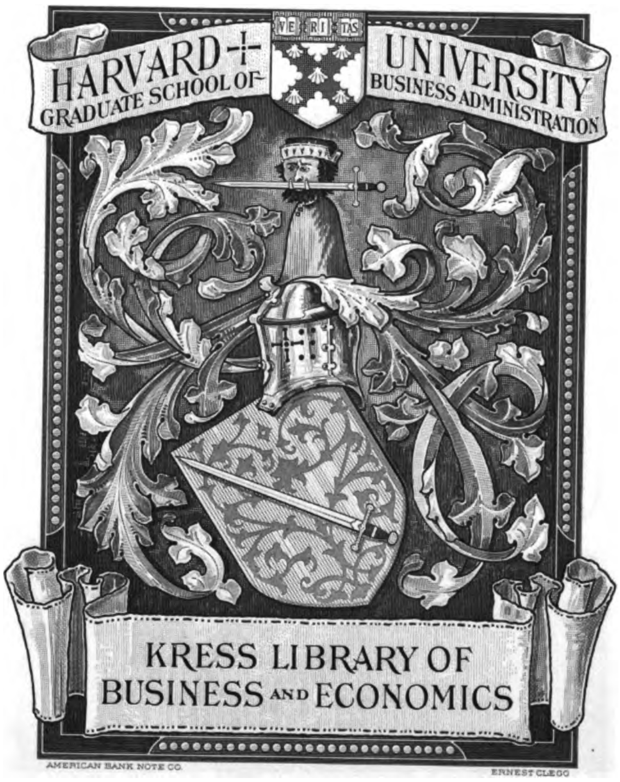

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MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE

HER MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS

APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO THE SUBJECT OF

AGRICULTURAL DEPRESSION,

WITH

APPENDICES.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
1894.

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3. Huskinson, William Lambe, 3rd day	Land Agent and Farmer in Nottinghamshire - -	19
4. Harrison, William, 4th day -	Tenant-farmer, Hutton's Ambo, Yorkshire. President of the Malton Agricultural Club, Hon. Sec. of the Yorkshire Union of Agricultural Clubs and Chambers of Agriculture.	35
5. Lushington, Edward Harbord, 4th day.	Treasurer of Guy's Hospital - - - -	45
6. Cocks, John, 4th day - -	Tenant-farmer, Ernsettle, King's Tammerton, Plymouth. Representative of the Devon and Cornwall Chamber of Agriculture.	49
7. Watson, John, 5th day - -	Land Agent to the Earl of Macclesfield, manages estates in Bucks, Dorset, Oxfordshire, and Essex.	56
8. Middleton, Christopher, 6th day -	Representative of the Cleveland Chamber of Agriculture	62
9. Kidner, Samuel, 6th and 7th days -	Tenant-farmer near Taunton. Representative of the Taunton Farmers' Club.	75
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20. Raynbird, Hugh E., 12th day -	Auctioneer, Surveyor and Valuer, Basingstoke. Land Agent to Lord Bolton, Hampshire.	177
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22. Tebbutt, Charles Prentice, 13th day.	Owner and occupier of land in Huntingdonshire. Manager of a branch of a private bank at St. Ives.	195
23. Squarey, Elias Pitts, 14th day -	Member of the firm of Rawlence and Squarey, Land Agents, Salisbury and Westminster.	203
24. Johnson, Oliver D., 15th day -	Owner and occupier of land in Suffolk. Representative of the Ixworth Farmers' Club, and Vice-Chairman of the Suffolk County Council.	217
25. Carrington-Smith, T., 15th and 18th days.	Tenant farmer in Staffordshire. Chairman of the Staffordshire Chamber of Agriculture.	231 & 277
26. Clay, Junior, John, 16th day -	Partner in the firm of Messrs. Clay, Robinson, & Co., Cattle Agents in Chicago, and manager and controller of several large cattle ranches in the United States. Late Assistant Commissioner to the Duke of Richmond's Commission.	236
27. Pringle, R. Hunter, 16th and 17th and 21st days.	Assistant Commissioner. Reported on the Isle of Axholme District of Lincolnshire, and the Ongar, Chelmsford, Maldon, and Braintree Districts of Essex.	246 & 334

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28. **Wilson Fox, Arthur**, 17th and 20th days.	Assistant Commissioner. Reported on the Garstang District of Lancashire and the Glendale District of Northumberland.	262 & 324
29. **Smith, William**, 17th, 18th, and 19th days.	Member of Parliament for the North Lonsdale Division of Lancashire, President of the Federation of Tenant Farmers' Associations.	268, 285, & 291
30. **Parker, Thomas**, 19th day - -	Tenant farmer in Cheshire, Churton Hall, Chester -	302
31. **Wyatt, Richard**, 20th day - -	Tenant farmer, Whitestaunton, Chard, Somerset -	312
32. **Turner, Jabez**, 20th and 21st days	Assistant Commissioner. Reported on the Frome District of Somerset, and the Stratford-on-Avon District of Warwickshire.	330 & 335
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34. **Hope, James**, 21st day - -	Assistant Commissioner. Reported on the counties of Perth, Fife, Forfar, and Aberdeen.	348
35. **Worthington, Thomas**, 22nd day -	Tenant farmer and auctioneer, Wigan. Representative of the Wigan Tenant Farmers' Association.	357
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37. **Rolleston, J. F. L.**, 23rd day -	Land Agent, Leicester - - - - - -	377
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MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE THE

ROYAL COMMISSION

ON

AGRICULTURE.

At 23, Great George Street, Westminster, S.W.

First Day.

Thursday, 9th November 1893.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.	CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.	ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.	JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.	GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.	WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.	WALTER HUME LONG, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.	CHARLES WHITEHEAD Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant Secretaries.*
FREEMAN THOMAS, Esq., }

Sir R. N. F. Kingscote, K.C.B.
9 Nov. 1893.

Sir R. NIGEL F. KINGSCOTE, K.C.B. (a Member of the Commission), examined.

1. (*Chairman.*) You were appointed Commissioner of Her Majesty's Woods and Forests in 1885, on the retirement of Mr. Charles Gore, were you not?—I was.

2. Mr. Gore gave evidence before the Duke of Richmond's Commission in 1880, did he not?—Yes.

Acreage of estates.

3. This Commission will be glad to supplement his evidence by any evidence that you are able to give as to the course of proceedings upon the Crown property in the interval. What is the total acreage of the estates under your charge?—They comprise about 69,500 acres, and are situate in 22 different counties.

4. What are the principal counties in which they are situate?—The largest quantity of agricultural land in any one county, is in Yorkshire, where the Crown owns upwards of 17,300 acres, principally in four large estates, the largest about 6,600 acres, being at Sunk Island, the Humber, and which consists entirely of land reclaimed from that river. There is another estate of about 4,630 acres, situate at Swine and Berningholme, near Hull, and another of about 3,345 acres, near Boroughbridge, and the fourth of nearly 1,200 acres at Woodhouse Grange between York and Beverley.

5. Then what are the estates in Lincolnshire?—In Lincolnshire the Crown has about 12,720 acres of agricultural land situate principally at Billingborough, where there is an estate of about 4,020 acres, at or in the district round Holbeach, where there are some 4,600 acres, and at Wingland, near Sutton Bridge, where there are about 3,200 acres. This latter estate consists largely of land that has been reclaimed from the sea.

6. With reference to Wiltshire, what have you to say?—In Wiltshire the Crown has about 3,925 acres in what is practically one estate near Devizes. In Essex, about 4,000 acres in practically one estate, and the great part of which is land that formerly formed part of Hainault Forest. In Sussex there is an estate of about 3,600 acres near Brighton. In Kent there are estates at Eltham and in the Isle of Sheppey, comprising nearly 4,000 acres of agricultural land. In Oxfordshire there are some 3,740 acres, principally at Whichwood, being land formerly part of Whichwood Forest.

7. And besides those, there are smaller areas of land in other counties?—Yes.

8. But those you have mentioned are the large properties you manage?—Yes.

9. You manage those estates, I presume, through receivers?—Through two receivers or agents, who are practical land agents in large practice: Messrs. Clutton are the receivers for the Midland and Southern counties, and Mr. S. W. Gore, of the firm of Smith, Gore, and Co., is the receiver for the Northern Counties.

Rental.

10. What is the present actual aggregate rental of those properties?—Perhaps I had better say first that of the 69,500 acres of agricultural land belonging to the

Crown which were in hand prior to Michaelmas 1892, about 1,677 acres were being cultivated by the Crown for the want of suitable tenants; the remainder, amounting to about 67,820 acres were let at a total rental for the year to Michaelmas 1892, of 79,999*l.*, which included tithe rentcharge, amounting to about 4,495*l.*

Deductions from rent.

11. Which is paid by the Crown?—Yes. From rental there were, however, authorised certain allowances and remissions of rent amounting in the whole to 8,661*l.*; deducting these allowances and remissions and the tithe rentcharge paid by the Crown, there will be a net rental of 66,842*l.* for 67,820 acres, or an average rent of somewhat less than 1*l.* an acre.

12. When you speak of allowances and remissions, were those temporary or permanent?—Temporary. In most cases being for the one year, but in a few for the two years. Allowances are, however, becoming almost permanent.

13. (*Lord Cobham.*) It would include allowances for grass seeds under this head, would it not?—I do not think that they would include grass seeds, I think that that would come under the head of improvements and outlay.

Drainage rates.

14. (*Chairman.*) Have the tenants to pay any burdens in the nature of drainage rates?—All the rates including drainage rates; on some of the Lincolnshire estates the latter are rather heavy.

Reductions in rent since 1879.

15. How far has that rental been reduced by you since 1880, when Mr. Gore gave his evidence?—He stated in his evidence in 1880, that the agricultural lands then under his charge consisted of about 70,000 acres, and that they were let at an average rent of 1*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* per acre. This was in addition to the tithe rentcharge which was then usually paid by the tenants; but I think from this rental should be deducted the allowances and remissions which had been authorised, and that perhaps the net rental did not then exceed about 30*s.* per acre.

16. Then there has been a reduction in the interval from about 30*s.* an acre to about 1*l.* per acre, practically?—Yes.

17. When did those reductions begin?—Do you mean since 1880?

18. The reductions from rent have been spread gradually over the interval?—They have been spread gradually over the interval. I may say that each estate has been considered separately, and still more, certain farms on these estates; they are not all alike.

19. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) The general result is a reduction of about 10*s.* per acre?—Yes.

20. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Since when?—Since 1879.

21. Is that up to last year?—Up to Michaelmas, 1892.

Reductions in rent preceding 1880.

22. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Had there been reductions in the years preceding 1880?—Yes.

23. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) About half-a-crown?—Mr. Gore, in his evidence, brought it up to that time, and he said, "Remissions of rent to Michaelmas, 1878, percentage of rental, 15*l.* 4*s.*"

24. (*Chairman.*) The honourable Commissioner asked whether there had been actual reductions of rent?—I think before that they were temporary allowances only.

25. Then the rental that you compare the present with was the maximum rental of some previous years against which there had been temporary abatements, but no absolute reductions of rent?—The temporary allowances were taken off by Mr. Gore, and they are taken off by myself in what I have just stated.

26. From the rental of 1*l.* 10*s.*?—It is net rental compared with net rental.

Reductions in land and rent since 1879.

27. Then it would appear from what you say that the agricultural land in the possession of the Crown has been reduced since 1879, by about 500 acres, and the rental has diminished by 35,150*l.*?—That is so.

28. And that it is now rather less than 1*l.* per acre, as compared with 30*s.* per acre in 1879?—Yes.

29. During the same period has there been a very large expenditure of a permanent character upon improvements?—A very large expenditure.

Expenditure on improvements.

30. Has that been found necessary in consequence of the condition of the tenants, and of the agricultural depression in the interval?—Yes. I may say after the wet season of 1879 and the following seasons a great deal of drainage was done to benefit the tenants, and the other outlays were for buildings.

31 (*Mr. Long.*) Does that statement include outlay on buildings, farmhouses, and cottages?—I can give you that.

32. Can you give the figures of the amount spent in houses and cottages during that period?—Perhaps I had better compare it with Mr. Gore's statement. Mr. Gore in the information which he supplied to the Commission in 1880, stated the expenditure by the Crown in repairs and improvements on the agricultural estates in the year to the 31st March 1879. For some years prior to that time there had been a continuous expenditure in new works and improvements; and I find that in the 14 years between the 31st March 1879 and the 31st March 1893 there have been expended by the Crown sums amounting altogether to 257,000*l.* in works of repair and improvement on the agricultural properties in England.

33. (*Chairman.*) Did he state what the average expenditure previous to 1879 had been?—Mr. Gore gave the one year I see; the year to Michaelmas 1879, permanent improvements 26,478*l.*, and repairs 1,189*l.*

34. He did not state what the average of permanent improvements for the previous 10 years was?—No, he did not.

35. I presume that expenditure in 1879 was exceptional on account of the state of the year?—Yes, I suppose so.

36. It could hardly be taken as an average?—I can hand in a statement of the amounts expended by the Crown upon farms in charge of myself from the 31st March 1879 to the 31st March 1893, if you like. (*See Appendix A., IV.*)

37. (*Mr. Long.*) But taking the Wiltshire Estate of 8,000 acres most of the expenditure was incurred before you took charge, in the shape of building, was it not?—Yes.

38. What new houses, cottages, and farm buildings were built before you took them over, under Mr. Gore?—I can give the expenditure on repairs and improvements on that one estate.

39. (*Chairman.*) What has been the aggregate expenditure on improvements from 1879 to the present time?—257,016*l.* 5*s.* 11*d.*

40. That includes repairs?—That includes repairs. On permanent improvements there were 220,589*l.*, and on repairs 36,426*l.* (*The witness handed in the statement, see Appendix A., I.*)

41. I presume the expenditure on repairs may be considered as the average expenditure which the Crown is bound to undertake, and the expenditure on improvements is that which they voluntarily undertake on account of the condition of the farms?—According to the agreement the tenants should do all the repairs, but since there has been so much agricultural depression I have found it necessary for the Crown to do some of them.

42. Then this expenditure on repairs must be taken as a deduction from the rent?—I think most of it ought to be.

43. Because under your agreement the tenant was bound to do the repairs?—Yes, he was bound to do the repairs.

44. Then besides that there has been expenditure on permanent improvements of 220,000*l.*?—Yes, the expenditure on such works has averaged upwards of 15,750*l.* per annum.

45. I observe in the return which you have laid before me and which will be printed for the information of the Commission that the expenditure on permanent improvements was very large between the years 1880 and 1887?—Yes, very large.

46. Was that due to the succession of bad seasons and the necessity of drainage, or to what was it due?—Drainage was a great item during those years.

47. That was required in consequence of the bad seasons?—Yes, and I think other expenditure was made with a view of helping the tenant with buildings which he thought were necessary and when they were thought to be necessary by the Crown.

48. Since 1887 the expenditure appears to have fallen off, and has averaged from 6,000*l.* to 9,000*l.* a year?—Yes.

49. What has that been mainly upon?—Drainage had been done before, so that there was no necessity for doing more, and the drainage was finished.

50. Can you give us the particulars of the estate to which the honorable member referred?—Do you mean Bishops Cannings and Bromham?

51. Yes?—I find that in the 14 years to 31st March 1893, the expenditure on Bishop Canning's estate in repairs and improvements was 32,857*l*., and on the Bromham estate, which adjoins it, was 8,201*l*.

52. Had there been many changes of tenancy in the interval?—There had been some, but no very great changes.

Land in hand.

53. Where farms have come in hand have you found much difficulty in reletting them?—Yes, and we have been obliged to take some into our own hands.

54. What addition has there been to the land in hand in the mean time?—Since Michaelmas 1892 the land cultivated by the Crown for want of suitable tenants has increased by two farms, while one that was in hand has been relet, the net result being that the land in hand has increased by 811 acres making a total now in hand of 2,488 acres or about $\frac{1}{28}$th of the total. The lands now in hand consist of (1.) A farm near Bedford of about 324 acres which has been in hand for many years; (2.) Some grass land containing about 207 acres in the Isle of Sheppey; (3.) Grass land containing 357 acres at Wingland in Lincolnshire; (4.) Two farms at Whichwood, Oxfordshire, comprising together about 1,028 acres; One has been in hand for a few years, and the other came into hand as from Michaelmas last. (5.) A farm containing 572 acres at Shimpling, in Suffolk, which had to be taken in hand as from Michaelmas, 1892, in consequence of the tenant being unable to continue.

55. And these farms now are all worked by the Crown?—They are all worked by the Crown.

56. How is the capital supplied for the working of those farms? Is it out of the revenue account?—Out of the revenue account by permission of the Treasury.

57. Have there been losses on those farms, or are they carried on at any profit?—These particular farms? two of them, the grass lands at Wingland and the Isle of Sheppey are generally let by tender for feed, and on these there have not been any losses. But on some of the other farms which have come into hand there has been a considerable loss.

58. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do you get any rent for those farms that you speak of which are not let for grazing?—For some years I have had rent from them.

59. During the past year did you get much?—No, not last year.

60. (*Chairman.*) Are these farms unlet because tenants could not be found for them, or because the offers made for them were not, in your opinion, sufficient?—Because tenants could not be found for them. I may have had a very low offer which I did not think it proper to take, but I have used every effort to obtain a tenant by advertising and otherwise. I need not inform the Commission, I may say without exception, that when the farms have come into hand, they have come in in a very poor state indeed, and we have worked them up into a very fair state, I venture to think.

61. When you got them into a fair state, did you try to let them, or did you keep them?—I would keep them for two or three years to get them clean and into a better state of cultivation, and then I would try to let them when I got them into a better state.

62. (*Lord Cobham.*) Is that outlay charged to repairs?—No; the accounts for each farm are kept separate. I get so much money according to the acreage, and farm it with that capital.

63. (*Chairman.*) Then when you have to make a deduction from the gross rent of the tithe, then of the money expended in improvements, third of the money spent in repairs, and, fourth, in the money required to be expended on farms coming in hand on their becoming vacant, or for any losses on the farm, I presume the actual net result to the Treasury is considerably reduced?—Very considerably reduced at times, but I must say in one or two seasons the farms, or one or two of the farms in hand have paid their rental.

64 And those are in hand?—Those are in hand, but it is quite exceptional.

65. Can you give us any statement of what has been the average amount actually paid into the Treasury during the interval?—From the farms in hand do you mean?

Net amount received by the Exchequer from agricultural land.

66. No, from the whole of the account of all those lands. You have told us about the reduction of rent. It has been very considerable, but you have not told us what is the actual net result of the payments into the Treasury in each year?—What we pay into the Treasury comes from every estate.

67. I mean the aggregate of all the estates?—We do not apportion it.

68. It includes, you mean, all other properties?—It includes all other properties, mineral and all others, and house property as well.

69. You cannot distinguish the landed estates in this respect from other properties?—Not in the amounts that we pay into the Exchequer.

70. It seems to me that it will be important to know what is the amount which the Crown has received in the interval after making all these deductions from the agricultural land?—I can put in a statement. I have it here in my hand. It shows the lands occupied by tenants in the Northern counties and in the Midland and Southern counties; the land in hand in the Midland and Southern counties; the rental for the year to the 10th of October in the Northern counties, and in the Southern and Midland counties; the allowances and remissions authorised for the year to the 10th October 1892, and the tithe in the same way. (*The statement was handed in, see Appendix A., II.*)

71. This does not seem to me to give what I want. This gives the rental after deduction of tithe, rentcharge, and allowances. What I want to know, and it will be interesting to know is, out of that rental of 67,000*l*. a year, how much really finds its way into the Treasury after payment of everything, after payment of money spent on improvements, on repairs, the tithe, rentcharge, and the money which you have to expend, either in taking land in hand, or in losses upon farms. Can you roughly, out of that 67,000*l*. a year, state what is the average you have paid into the Treasury. Perhaps you can supply that later?—I will try and make out a statement, but whether it will be a very reliable one or not, I do not know. (*See* Appendix A., III.)

72. It is evident from your statement that very large deductions have to be made from that 67,000*l*. a year?—Yes.

73. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Could you show the expenditure separately, as you charge capital expenditure against the revenue?—I have given the actual expenditure year by year. I will try and make out a statement.

74. (*Chairman.*) I think it would be interesting to know, because your position is that of a considerable number of other landowners, what is the net result of what you really do pay into the Treasury, after paying everything?—Quite so.

75. (*Mr. Little.*) Would not it be well to distinguish the money spent in improvements from those outgoings which are in the nature of repairs, the tithe rentcharge; improvements are a deduction from the cash received at the time, but they are an investment of capital, or may be so regarded. They may not be remunerative, but money spent on improvements is different in character to money spent on repairs or ordinary outlay?—Yes.

76. (*Chairman.*) Could you give us in respect of the four or five principal estates illustrations showing the expenditure on those estates with all improvements and the rent received?—Yes. I think I have read it out.

77. (*Mr. Long.*) Then the addition of the balances in this case would give us the figures that we want?—Yes.

78. (*Chairman.*) Has there been considerable difference in the different estates?—Very considerable.

Comparison between estates in different counties.

79. Which have been the worst properties in respect of the greatest reductions and the greatest expenditure required by the tenants for improvements?—Speaking broadly there has been very much less required in the Northern counties than in the Southern and Midland counties.

(*a*.) Yorkshire

80. Take the estates you mentioned in Yorkshire; do you consider those in the worst category or in the best?—In the best; they even differ there.

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(*b.*) Lincolnshire.

81. Then in Lincolnshire, what do you say about the estates there ?—There has been a great deal of money laid out in Lincolnshire.

82. And are the reductions heavy ?—Yes, but still not so heavy as further south, I should say.

83. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What parts of Lincolnshire ?—Near Holbeach, Billingborough, and Wingland.

(*c.*) Lancashire.

84. (*Chairman.*) I observe from the return you place in my hands that in the case of increases there is an estate at Aldingham where the rental in 1879 was 2,038*l.* and where in the present year with the addition of 100 acres to the area the rental is now 2,191*l.* showing that practically there has been no reduction there of rent ?—There are allowances to come off that.

85. But there have been no permanent reductions of rent in Lancashire ?—The present rent includes the tithe.

86. A deduction must be made for tithe ?—Yes.

87. You take that into account as some reduction ?—Yes, 268*l.*

(*d.*) Northamptonshire.

88. Then take Northamptonshire, there is an estate at Salcey with a farm of 254 acres in which the rental, in 1879, was 619*l.*, and is now 531*l.* There has been some reduction there ?—A little. That is a peculiar estate; it is scattered with small holdings around the Salcey Forest. You must not take that as an example; there is a good deal of shooting on that.

(*e.*) Wiltshire.

89. I was going to point out the very great reductions in some of the others. On the other hand, take the estate in Wiltshire—Bishops Cannings—with an acreage of 7,023, the rental in 1879 was 8,000*l.*, and in 1893 the acreage had increased by 200 acres, and is now 7,226, and the rent is 4,516*l.* subject to a tithe paid by the Crown now of 133*l.*, making a reduction therefore of very nearly 50 per cent. ?—Yes.

90. On the other hand, there is an estate at Bromham in Wiltshire, the acreage of which was 1,674, with a rental of 2,140*l.*, and where the present rental in a very small increased acreage is 1,800*l.*, a reduction of 300*l.* speaking in round figures ?—And 300*l.* more for tithes.

(*f.*) Yorkshire.

91. It is not mentioned here. Then the estate in Yorkshire, at Swine, and Benningholme. There, again, the reductions appear to have been very great; with an acreage of 4,300 and a rental of 8,255*l.* the present acreage is the same, but the rent is reduced to 4,355*l.*, and from that tithe has to be deducted ?—That is excessively bad land, a great deal of that estate has suffered very severely.

92. Generally speaking, I may say, looking over this list, you seem to have some of the worst land in England ?—Some of it is quite the worst land.

93. They are the districts which have suffered most, I suppose ?—Yes. (*The statement was handed in, see Appendix IV.*)

Leases.

94. Now with regard to leases, has it been the practice with the Crown to give leases ?—Yes, it has. I have power to grant leases of land for agricultural purposes not exceeding 31 years, but at the present time I do not find any demand for leases.

95. Are there any leases still existing ?—They are very nearly all run out.

96. And do you find that tenants will not take leases on renewal ?—The utmost you can get them to do is to take the farm for two or three years, with yearly tenancies afterwards.

97. And, generally speaking, now the whole of the Crown property is let on those terms ?—Yes.

98. And that is by the wish of the tenants and not of the Crown itself ?—Yes.

99. The Crown is ready to grant leases ?—Perfectly ready.

100. What length of lease would they grant ?—21 years, generally.

Shooting rights.

101. And have the tenants the right of shooting ?—Always; there is hardly an exception.

102. What do they do generally with the shooting; do they sublet it ?—Yes.

103. Is that the rule ?—There is no rule, but it is the practice.

104. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) It is the general practice ?—It is the general practice to sublet it, I think, but I never interfere, or hardly ever.

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105. (*Chairman.*) Do you know the average that they get for their shooting ?—No, it would vary very much.

Sub-division of farms.

106. Have you found it necessary in the interval to make any changes in the area of the farms when they come into hand ?—You mean to divide them ?

107. Yes.—No, I have not been able to do that.

108. You say you have not been able; is that on account of the difficulty of finding capital for them ?—If I thought it very desirable I should endeavour to do it, but the outlay would be so very considerable that perhaps there would be no chance of letting it even then, and I have not thought it advisable to do so. I have tried to diminish some of the holdings by letting off parts of them, but I have no case that I know of where I have actually divided a large holding in two from the difficulty of putting up houses and buildings upon it.

109. Where you did so and found it necessary to lay out money in erecting new buildings, would that come out of the revenue for the year, or is there any capital account ?—There is a capital account which has to be paid off in 25 years.

110. Is that an account from which you pay all things of this kind, or is that capital expenditure ?—All the permanent improvements.

111. Then the money expended in permanent improvements is not paid out of the revenue account ?—No; it is paid out of the capital account, and is paid off in the 25 years.

112. Have you got any sum standing to your account to the capital account, or how is that managed by the Crown ?—The money is invested.

113. Out of other moneys in the hands of the Crown ?—It is invested by the Commissioners.

114. Have you got any standing sum to your account for that purpose, or is it taken out of the general account ?—It is taken out of the general account; it is paid out of the capital moneys.

115. Do you keep them separately ?—We have two accounts, a capital and an income account.

116. But I understand you that out of other moneys that you have in hand you pay for these permanent improvements, and that is treated as a capital account ?—Yes.

117. And is paid off annually by sums which are put to the general account in 25 years ?—That is so.

118. Out of that money, you would provide any money which might be necessary for additional farms ?—Yes.

119. Then it is not from want of capital, so to speak, that you have refrained from dividing farms ?—Certainly not.

120. But from a feeling that under present circumstances it is doubtful, even when so divided, that you would get the rental which would justify the expenditure ?—That is it.

Number and size of tenancies.

121. Will you state shortly the number of tenancies that you have got and the sizes of them ?—I have got a return and I will give it to you shortly. We have taken all above three acres. In this return there are 67 holdings between three and 50 acres; 16 holdings between 50 and 100 acres; 37 of between 100 and 200 acres; 43 of between 200 and 300 acres; 19 of between 300 and 400 acres; 17 of between 400 and 500 acres; 13 of between 500 and 600 acres; 12 of between 600 and 700 acres; eight of between 700 and 800 acres; three of between 800 and 900 acres; one of between 900 and 1,000 acres; and eight tenants who hold about 1,000 acres. That makes a total of 244 agricultural holdings of above three acres, and of these five are in hand. There are therefore 240 tenants of holdings exceeding three acres.

122. There are 67 holdings between 3 and 50 acres. I presume these are not farms but probably land let to people who have other occupations ?—Yes.

123. Small holdings of that kind ?—That is so.

124. Then with regard to the farms above that; it would strike one that the average is rather high. Is the average size of the holding rather high or low—what do you say ?—Perhaps you would call them high. The farms in Wiltshire are very large, long slips, taking in part of the Downs; and, again, on Sunk Island, there are large holdings.

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125. There are only 16 holdings between 50 and 100 acres, and 37 between 100 and 200 acres. The bulk of the farms therefore are above 200 acres?—Yes. (*The witness handed in the statement, see Appendix V.*)

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.een
.e and
.ll farms.

126. Have you found much distinction in the condition of the smaller farms as compared with the larger ones during this time of depression. Have you had greater difficulty in obtaining rents from the one or the other?—I think not. I think taking it generally, as regards the larger farms one has been surer of one's rents, speaking generally. There are exceptions both ways.

127. Are the Crown tenants of the large farms, mostly men of capital?—I think so.

128. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Have you figures to show definitely on which farms the losses occur; do they occur on the small or the large holdings?—It would be very difficult to get that out.

129. (*Chairman.*) Have you been as ready, as far as you can, to let land in small holdings?—Yes, certainly.

.llotments.

130. And in allotments?—And in allotments.

131. Have applications been made to you by labourers and others for small holdings?—I have had applications for small holdings to a very small extent, and on one estate only.

132. How much is the total set apart in the Crown estates for allotments?—At Michaelmas, 1892, on the Crown estates under my charge there were upwards of 425 acres let for allotments, and set out in about 1,112 allotments and small holdings, and held by 790 tenants, including on the one property above mentioned 22 acres, set out in eight small holdings and held by eight tenants. That 22 acres, I believe, is the only real application I have had for small holdings.

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133. Are the tenants under strict terms with regard to the course of cultivation?—They are. I can put in the agreement which is in use by the Crown, and the tenants are under certain restrictions. I could give what they are.

134. Are they not allowed to sell off the hay and straw?—No; according to the agreement they are not, unless they bring back the value in manure.

135. In practice, during the last 10 years, have you found it expedient to relax those rules?—I may say pretty nearly altogether.

136. Altogether?—No inquiry is made, not unless the Crown Surveyor sees that the farm is being run out, and then, perhaps, the attention of the tenant would be called to it if there had been any breach of the agreement.

Changes in
cultivation.

137. Has there been much change in the cultivation of the farms during the last 10 years?—I think not, speaking generally.

138. Has much land been laid down in grass?—There has been an increasing demand for that, and the Crown has spent a good deal of money in giving seeds for that purpose, which would come under the head of improvements.

139. Taking those estates in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, are they mainly arable farms?—Yes, mainly. The largest one in Sunk Island is entirely an arable estate.

140. Where wheat is grown?—Where wheat is grown.

141. Mainly?—I cannot say mainly now, because of late years they have taken to growing mustard very considerably.

142. (*Mr. Everett.*) For seed?—For seed, I meant for grinding, to sell to the mustard merchants.

143. That is what I meant?—Quite so.

144. (*Chairman.*) Then with regard to the estate in Essex that you mentioned at Hainault, has any change taken place there?—Very little I should say.

145. Is that a wheat district?—That is entirely wheat—arable land. I may say there that from the time it was broken up till the lease expired one man had a very large proportion of the holding and that has been divided into three holdings now. What he farmed altogether I think amounted nearly to 2,000 acres, and that has been divided into three holdings and pieces given off.

146. Have you felt the full effect yet of the last two years—the very low prices of wheat?—I think not; we certainly have not felt the effect of this last season.

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Effect of low
prices and
bad season.

147. You do not know, then, what effect it will have?—I am afraid it will be very disastrous. I have been round most of the estates and I may say that the complaints, or rather the cry of the bad season, is very loud, and I am afraid will be justified especially by the bulk of the corn crops.

148. And that following on a bad year last year?—Yes, in most places last year, but even this year there have been great differences. For instance, in the case of that large estate at Sunk Island, I find that it suffered very severely with drought, and on the Wolds of Yorkshire not so very far off where the Crown has only two small farms they say they have hardly had a better season having had rain at the right time. But that was about the exception of the whole of the estates.

Reductions
in rent.

149. Apart from the last two years do you consider that the reductions of rent that had been made up to that time, had fairly met the demands of the tenants and that they were able to farm at a profit?—I certainly think so. I can only say that I try to see the tenants once a year if I possibly can, and I have been thanked for what has been done for them, and I rather think that they were satisfied. I cannot say about the profits that they have made, but I think I can say that, speaking broadly, they have felt satisfied with the reductions that have been made to them.

150. Had the reductions of rent that you speak of been mainly made or partly made before the last two years?—The reductions have been made ever since 1879 or 1880, but certainly the chief reductions have been made in the last two or three years. On reflection, I think that the heaviest reductions were made after the effects of 1879 and 1880, I should say so.

151. What I am now trying to estimate is whether, before the very serious effects of the last two years of 1892 and 1893, the reductions of rent had been such as to enable the farmers to conduct their business at a fair profit?—It has been my wish and endeavour to keep the tenants on the Crown land, and I may say, to "live and let live." My object is to keep them on their holdings.

152. Had you many changes of tenancies, would you say, during that period or not?—I should say not. There were the usual deaths and some changes.

Land in
hand.

153. The amount of land in hand although perhaps large in some sense is not very large in proportion to the total area of the Crown estates?—I think not, because there are 207 acres in the Isle of Sheppey in hand, and 357 acres in Wingland, and that 357 acres being the last reclaimed land I do not try to let except by auction for feeding. I keep it in hand and lay out money upon it in manures.

154. Deducting those, the proportion of land unlet to the whole area of the estate does not seem to be very considerable?—I do not think it is.

155. Is there anything else you wish to say?—I would like to put in a copy of the draft form of agreement. (*The witness handed in a copy of the agreement, see Appendix A., VI.*)

Particulars
of estates.

156. Mr. Long who has been obliged to leave, has asked me to get from you a statement showing separately for each estate, the acreage and the rental for 1878, and the acreage and rental for 1892; also (*a*) the amount spent, in the meantime, in annual and necessary repairs, that is, maintenance; (*b*) the expenditure on improvements; (1) on buildings, (2) drainage, distinguishing them, and, giving a summary of the amount spent during, say, the preceding 20 years. Perhaps you will be able to supply us with that?—I should be very happy to do that if you could limit the number of the estates. It would take a great deal of time.

157. We only want four or five of the principal estates—not the smaller ones. Will you do it as far as you can?—Yes. (*See* Appendix A., III.)

Value of
land in the
Isle of
Sheppey.

158. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) May I ask what is the cause of the reduction in the value of land in the Isle of Sheppey, which is, I believe, very strong and good land?—Simply that the seasons have been cold and wet, which has affected it very much, and you know it is almost entirely corn growing except upon the marshes, and the prices have affected the produce. Also it has been very deficient in produce; it has produced very much less during the last few years than many years previously.

159. And the reduction has been very great?—Very great indeed.

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160. That I know from my own experience?—Quite so.

Labourers.

161. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Can you tell us whether the number of labourers employed on these Crown lands has diminished or not? Have you any facts before you?—I am not able to tell you that. I think there is as much demand for the cottages now by the tenants as there was formerly.

162. I wish to know whether the labourers are better satisfied now than they were in 1880. Have you any facts before you on that subject?—I hear a great deal about it when I meet the tenants.

163. But you have nothing to show where it appears in the accounts or in any of the estate papers?—As to the number?

164. As to the number of labourers, or whether they are better off or worse off?—Only the cottages under each farm.

165. Except the cottages. Are they as numerous as ever?—They are as numerous as ever. I think if any cottages get worn out we are almost invariably asked to put up new ones, and probably there are the same number.

Rental valuation.

166. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Some of the farms the Crown have in its own hands have paid their rental; on what valuation is that rental based?—We would take the rent before it came into our hands probably.

167. During the year you took it?—Yes.

168. And those farms since this reduction have been entered in the valuation roll by the assessor at a less rent, at a certain reduction?—Not that I know of.

169. Do they accept the valuation that the Crown puts upon the farm as its rental in the return given in?—I am hardly able to answer the question, but to my knowledge there has been no question about it. I think the assessments are reduced.

170. Reduced from the 1879 years?—Reduced from the 1879 years certainly.

171. I fancy that perhaps might be given us from the valuation roll very simply?—If you only want it for the farms in hand I could get it, but it would be a large business to get the others.

Expenditure on improvements.

172. (*Mr. Little.*) I should like to ask you one question, you mentioned 220,000*l.* as spent in improvements?—Yes.

173. Would you indicate generally what the nature of the improvements was?—Drainage, building of farm houses, barns—enlarging the farm buildings.

174. Would it include embanking from the sea? For instance, in Wingland would there be any?—At Wingland it would be done by the drainage authority.

175. Or making roads or developing a new estate?—Making roads would be included in that.

176. These improvements must be considered capital expenditure?—Capital expenditure.

177. And I think you said that they were not taken out of revenue?—No.

178. But they are included in the sum of 220,000*l.*?—Every one of them.

Land in hand.

179. Would you give us some general idea of the characteristics of the farms which you have been obliged to take in hand—what the nature of the farming is. Take, for instance, the 324 acres near Bedford?—Well, that farm is very stiff, cold, clay land.

180. Principally arable land?—Almost entirely, but I have endeavoured to lay down two or three fields.

Isle of Sheppey.

181. Is the Sheppey land on the London clay, or does the farm lie in the lower marsh?—Some of both. What is in hand is only the grass land.

182. Was that taken in hand because it was difficult to let?—We were unable to let it. The tenant gave it up and we could not get another tenant.

183. Some of the marsh lands are let with arable farms on the mainland, not taken alone?—They are. That is what we generally do; we could not get tenants for those.

184. Wingland you keep in hand for the purpose of making the land?—Yes, for the purpose of making the land; so that I can put manure into it when I like.

185. That is land reclaimed from the sea?—Yes.

186. And some of it has been ploughed?—Some of it has been ploughed.

187. It is now laid down to pasture?—It is now laid down to pasture.

Whichwood estate.

188. Then Whichwood, 1,028 acres, that is disafforested land?—It is disafforested land.

189. Is that light soil?—It is light but of the worst sort, because in it stiff clay crops up incessantly, and you may say literally there is no grassland upon it.

190. And that, I presume, hardly pays the expenses of cultivation?—It did better two years ago, but I am afraid last year and this there will be no profit.

191. Then the Sussex farm; is that a down farm. Kingsdown it is, I understand?—In Suffolk, you mean?

Farms under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

192. As to the agreement you put in, I may just ask whether it has much altered since 1879?—It has very much altered in one way, that is under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

193. I mean in respect of cultivation and the sale of produce?—Yes; I have not got an old one here.

Restrictions in cultivation.

194. You said that the tenants were allowed to sell hay and straw, and bring back their value in manure?—Yes.

195. Is that the manurial value of the thing sold or a proportion of the amount received?—I do not think that it is specified exactly. The clause in the agreement is: "The lessee may sell and carry off the "premises hay and wheat straw (except the produce of "the last two years), not exceeding one half of the "produce in any year, on condition of bringing back "upon the premises within six months after any such "sale or carrying off, either one half of the market "value of the hay and straw sold or carried of, in good "rotten dung, bones, or other manure approved of in "writing by the lessor, or three-fourths of such market "value in linseed cake, cotton cake, or other feeding "stuff not produced on the holding, and approved of "in writing by the lessor."

196. And the return is based upon the amount received?—Yes.

197. And not upon the manurial value of the thing removed?—No.

District most affected by the depression.

198. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Could you tell us which of your estates you think have suffered most—where the depression has been worst?—Well, according to the returns, Wiltshire is very bad; Essex is very bad this year; and I am afraid that Sussex will be very bad, for they suffered from the drought.

199. (*Chairman.*) You should distinguish between this year and previous years, because this year the drought is a very exceptional one?—Yes.

200. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I only wish to know generally which has suffered most?—I can only repeat my answer to the Chairman, and that was that the Northern counties have suffered less than the Midland and Southern counties.

Reduction of rent.

201. And now you have said what the average reduction of rent has been on all those estates put together, could you tell us what has been the maximum reduction of rent on any particular estate?—It would appear here on this table. I have not worked that out. I think Bishops Cannings the one in Wiltshire would be as bad as any.

202. What has been the greatest reduction in rent there?—Well, the rent in 1879 was 8,014*l.*, and now it is 4,516*l.*, less 133*l.* of tithe which is paid by the Crown. I also think that in Bedfordshire the Stagsden estate is almost as bad. The rental in March 1879 was 4,552*l.*; it was in March 1893, 2,753*l.*, besides which 598*l.* was paid for tithe by the tenants, and is now paid by the Crown.

203. I do not know whether it is asking you to go too far, but could you tell us what is the largest reduction you have had to make on any particular farm?—I think that the Isle of Sheppey would be as bad as any place.

204. (*Chairman.*) Bedfordshire seems to be the largest proportional reduction of rent. It is rather over 50 per cent.?—Yes.

205. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I will not press the thing now if you are not prepared to give an answer?—I can give you the whole of the estates if you like. I think I may say that in some cases 60, and as high as 70 per cent. has been given. Of course those are exceptions.

Land in hand.

206. With regard to the land that is in hand, is it in hand because you were unable to let it, or is it because you were not satisfied with the rents offered, or have you any other reason?—It has come in hand because I could not get a tenant for it. I have had an offer for this or that farm, but at a very inadequate rent as I consider.

207. Are there some farms for which you have had no offers at all?—I can hardly say that I have had an offer for the one at Stagsden. No offer has been put before me by the surveyor.

208. (*Chairman.*) For how long is that?—Ever since I have been Commissioner. I found it in hand when I came in.

209. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You accounted for it by the fact that, broadly speaking, the land was in very bad condition when you took it in hand, and you said that you preferred to keep it till you got it cleaned, and into good condition, and when you have accomplished that you have sometimes let it?—Several times.

Comparison between large and small farms.

210. Do you think large farms go back again into the same bad condition as before?—Not since I have been Commissioner.

211. Could you give us any opinion as to what sized holdings have weathered the storm of the depression best?—The Chairman asked me that. I really cannot give an opinion, because there have been cases of both; but I still think that the larger farms, taking the Crown estates altogether, have been less in arrear than the smaller ones.

212. (*Chairman.*) What should you call very large farms, because something would turn upon that? What should you say was the size of the farms that have weathered the storm best?—400 or 500 acres.

213. Not larger than that?—No. On the other hand, there are some of the smallest that have given no trouble as regards rent.

214. Would you say that the medium sized farms, between 150 and 400 acres have suffered more than others, large and small?—It is very hard to know. I have had cases of all kinds that have suffered very much, and there has been a difficulty in getting the rent.

215. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You are probably hardly able to give a general answer to this question, but I rather gather from what you say your impression is, that the farms over something like 400 acres would perhaps come off the best?—I think so. Certainly the large farms in the north of England have done best; the large ones in the south not so well, I may say worse than the smaller.

Effect of depression in Yorkshire and Lancashire.

216. Yorkshire has suffered least of any of the districts with which you are personally concerned, I understand?—I think it has.

217. And in Lancashire I think you said no permanent reductions of rent have been made, except the remission of the tithe?—Hardly any.

218. What is the reason of that?—Well, I was very much surprised for the first few years after I became Commissioner on going into Lancashire to see how little they suffered, I may say, from climate. I am afraid during the past few years they have suffered considerably; but for a certain time they did not seem to suffer at all.

219. You are of opinion that the depression in Lancashire is of more recent origin than in many other parts of the country?—Yes, and perhaps caused by the prices.

220. Has the time arrived, do you think, when you will be obliged to make reductions in Lancashire also?—I have had no report as yet from the Crown Surveyor.

221. You cannot say whether he has had applications made to him?—No, I am very much afraid that we shall have to make reductions.

Reduction of rent.

222. In the case of the reductions of rent that have been made, have they been reductions to old tenants or to new tenants upon taking a fresh occupation, or to both?—To both. I should say principally to old tenants.

Settlement of rent.

223. In the case of a new tenant who takes a farm in one of those districts where the depression has been now-a-days who settles the rent? Do the tenants practically make their own terms or do you stick to the offer?—They meet the Crown Surveyor who settles it with them I think, and then before it is let of course it is brought before me.

224. What I want to arrive at is a little more than that; do the tenants say practically what rent they will give or not?—Now-a-days it has got pretty nearly to that Of course I should not let a farm on a big estate at less than 5*s.* an acre when all the other tenants were paying 10*s.* I would judge very much from what was being paid by the other tenants on the estate.

Farmers under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

225. With regard to the agreements under which farms are held, I understood you to say that they are now under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

226. When was the change made?—When the Act came into force.

227. When the change was made, was it by the desire of the tenants, or at the option of the tenants, or was it the policy of your Department?—The policy of the Department I think. The Act was compulsory, as you know.

228. Compulsory unless there was an agreement to contract out of it?—Yes.

229. (*Chairman.*) Unless there was an agreement which in the opinion of the Court was better?—Yes.

230. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) There have been many cases which have come under my knowledge in which tenants have had the option of the Agricultural Holdings Act or remaining under the existing agreement or having no change, and they have chosen agreements in preference, but in this case, as I understand, it was the policy of the Department to adopt the Act?—Yes.

231. You have had a considerable number of changes I suppose in tenancies during the last few years?—We have had some, but, as I said before, no very large number.

232. You have had a certain number?—A certain number.

233. Among all the changes that you have had have you had any demand made for changes in the terms of the agreement or the Act. What I want to arrive at is whether in your experience you have found any sensible demand for greater changes in the nature of giving greater security of tenure or more compensation for improvements?—No; as far as I know they have been content with the Crown agreement.

Restrictions in cultivation.

234. The restriction of which you spoke, namely, as to the sale of produce off the farm, I understand is generally relaxed?—I think very much relaxed.

235. Is that because you find yourself unable to retain the restriction, or is it because you think it undesirable to maintain it?—Because when we get a tenant farming well we have been very glad to keep him and we let him do very much as he likes as long as he leaves his farm in a proper state of cultivation at the end of the period.

236. (*Chairman.*) Has it been a sensible relief to the tenants relaxing those rules about hay and straw?—I should say so, certainly.

237. They have sold hay and straw off the land?—I should think so; in fact I am sure they have in many cases.

Sub-division of farms.

238. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) On the question of dividing large holdings I understood you to say that in many cases you would think it desirable, and that you had the means of doing it, but that it had not been done because in your opinion it would not pay—was that so?—Yes.

239. Have you ever considered any means which might be adopted for promoting the division of land and for creating a greater number of farms of moderate size with any success?—Do you mean as to obtaining money for the purpose?

240. Yes?—No, I have not, because I have no doubt that if I thought it advisable and I went to the Treasury I should be surprised if they did not allow me to have the capital to do it, provided I could say that by laying out that capital there would be a good prospect of a fair per-centage for the capital.

241. You think it would be desirable if it could be done?—In some cases, not in all.

242. But you see great difficulty in getting over the preliminary expenses?—I do, to do it at a profit. I think it depends so very much upon locality.

Causes of the depression.

243. Are you in a position to say at all to what causes the tenants of your various estates chiefly attribute the depression in their industry?—I should say broadly the climate, bad seasons, and above all latterly the bad prices for everything, both corn and stock. Of course I hear complaints of labour, not so much the want of

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The Agricultural Holdings Act.

being able to obtain labour, but the deterioration of labour. You asked me about the Agricultural Holdings Act; there was no contracting out of it. The present Agricultural Holdings Act is, as you know, a compulsory Act, the old one was voluntary and the Crown contracted out of that Act as Mr. Gore said in his evidence in 1880.

244. That is the first Act?—Yes.

Rental.

245. (*Mr. Dalton.*) The average rental of the Crown agricultural lands now is 1*l.* an acre as I understand?—Under 1*l.* taking the whole average.

246. And in 1879 it was 30*s.* per acre?—About 30*s.*

247. What was the maximum that it ever attained in previous years?—I think Mr. Gore said 30*s.*

248. It never was higher, was it?—It was 32*s.* 6*d.*

249. And in what year would that be reached?—I should think 1877. Mr. Gore began to make allowances after 1877.

250. In 1877 your agricultural land reached this maximum?—I should say so.

251. Could you give a table of the preceding years to show how far back it was when it was at its present value, a little under 1*l.*?—I see Mr. Gore put in a statement from 1852 to 1879 which showed the changes of the acreage and the rental. It could be got out from that. It would be a very difficult thing to get out.

252. I want to know whether there has been at any time such a bad state of things as at present in the rental, or whether this fall from 1877 is a fall from the highest average rental that you have ever received from your land to the lowest?—You want to know whether the present rental has ever been so low?

253. Yes; and how far back you would probably have to go, roughly, for that?—I do not know how to get at it. Between 1852 and 1877 it increased considerably, but I should doubt its being as low as it is now. It would be very difficult to get out because there have been several estates bought since then. I do not know how to get at it quite.

254. You would take the rental from your estates?—Yes.

255. (*Chairman.*) Practically the rent is very much what it was in 1852, is it not?—Yes.

256. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You would only have to take the total rental and divide the number of acres, and you would get the average?—On the estates it would be so.

257. You would get a different class, but you would have the number of acres in each year, would you not be able to get the average in that way?—There is a great difficulty in getting it.

258. (*Chairman.*) In Huntingdonshire the estate of Great Staughton in 1852 the average was 1,062 as compared with 1,058 which is practically the same; the rental in 1852 was 468*l.*, and in 1879 it had risen to 1,546*l.*, and it is now 750*l.*?—There are allowances to the tenant.

259. But still making large deductions and allowances, the rent has not got down to what it was in 1852?—That is so.

Expenditure on improvements.

260. (*Mr. Dalton.*) There was a very large expenditure on improvements on this estate at Devizes, I think?—Yes.

261. What was the nature of the improvement?—I think there was a certain amount of draining in the low land, but the expenditure was principally in farm houses, cottages, and farm buildings.

262. It has not proved remunerative?—I should say not.

263. What class of improvements have you found most remunerative, buildings or drainage?—In many cases the drainage.

264. And they are all charged in the same way to capital?—Yes.

265. But the drainage and buildings are both carried to capital and charged 25 years?—Yes.

266. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Can you give me any comparison of the expenditure say for the 10 years preceding 1879, and the last 10 years, and whether or not the large expenditure which took place from say 1880 to 1887 was due to the fact that a smaller amount had been expended in the preceding years?—No, I do not think it is due to that. I am afraid Mr. Gore does not give it, but I should not think it is the fact. As I said before the large expenditure after 1879 for a few years I should say would be chiefly in drainage, and of course some new buildings. But I know as a fact that on one or two of the estates there were very large drainage works after those wet seasons.

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267. Then the tithe has now to be paid by you?—Yes.

Tithe.

268. Has the rent risen in proportion to the tithe, or have you had to give it back?—I tried to get it in some cases, but I think I may say that in many cases it is paid entirely by the Crown.

Local rate.

269. Can you give us any information at all as to what the amount of the local rates paid in 1879 was and the rates paid now—whether there has been any increase or not?—I am afraid I cannot give you that.

270. To get that information there would be a lot of trouble I have no doubt?—I thought of it when I knew I was going to give evidence, and we should have liked to have got it out, but we thought it really impracticable. (*See* Appendix A., III.)

271. Can you give us any general opinion as to whether the rates have increased since 1879?—As far as my own knowledge goes I could not give an opinion except that I know this, they have increased in some places, for instance, where there have been School Boards, and in Lincolnshire the drainage rates are perhaps rather higher.

272. Of course those rates have been paid by the tenants?—By the tenants.

Reductions of rent.

273. May I ask whether the reductions of rent have been greater on grass land or on land that grows corn?—Certainly on the corn-growing land.

274. And has it been greater on large or small holdings?—The actual remissions?

275. The actual remissions—the per-centage of remissions?—I really do not think I can answer that question. As I said before every estate has been treated separately and in some cases different farms upon the estates owing to position chiefly, and of course the nature of the soil.

276. But I presume on the same estate there were some small holdings and some large ones, have the remissions been on the large or on the small ones?—They have been treated very nearly equally. I do not mean to say that a holding of 30 acres of grass is treated in the same way as one of 30 acres of arable.

Condition of agriculture in Lancashire.

277. I mean the conditions being the same, can you give any reasons why the reductions of rent have not been made in Lancashire? Is it not owing to the cultivation or to a different method of cropping?—No, I think as a matter of fact during the bad wet seasons from 1880 up to six or seven years afterwards they did not suffer in the way that they did in other parts of the country from climate simply.

278. It is warmer there, is it?—It is warmer and there is not so much rain. It is situated on the seashore, well sheltered from the north and east, and I found on going there that they certainly have not suffered in the way that other parts of England have; but I am afraid during the last two years they have suffered.

279. Is there any difference in the rotation of crops in Lancashire from that in other parts of your estate?—No, I think not.

280. May I ask you whether there are any complaints of any restrictions under the agreement?—None have reached me.

281. And, of course, the rental, I presume, would be practically the same upon large and small holdings, the conditions being the same?—Certainly, with different estates.

282. May I ask you how you let your farms, whether by tender or how?—I let them by private agreement; I have put a farm up for tender, but I did not like it.

Method of letting farms.

283. Has it not been the practice to let the land then by tender?—No. I cannot say at any time that it was the practice. I think at Whichwood, when Whichwood was disafforested, that was let on tender, I know it was.

284. Then the rent is settled by you or your surveyor, and the tenant has to give that rental?—The surveyor sees the tenant or the would-be-tenant, and they come to an agreement between them, and it is then laid before me, and I accept it or not, as I think fit.

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285. Are the farms put up to public competition?—No. To auction do you mean?

286. No. Are different men allowed to compete for the farms?—Yes. They are advertised, and anybody may make an offer for them.

287. Then they practically would be let by tender?—No, I think not, because although one man might offer for it a higher rent than another man, perhaps his status would not be so good or there might be some reason why he should not have it.

Compensation under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

288. May I ask you under the Agricultural Holdings Act, how many tenants have been awarded compensation?—We have only had about one or two cases.

289. (*Lord Cobham.*) They went to arbitration, I suppose?—They went to arbitration.

290. (*Chairman.*) As against you?—As against us.

291. Generally speaking it would be as between the incoming tenant and the outgoing tenant, but you say there have been only one or two cases?—The only one I can call to mind is the one at Hainault, in Essex, a farm of 2,000 acres, that went to arbitration, and there is one only very small holding near Windsor that may go to arbitration.

292. (*Mr. Lambert.*) There are only two cases in the whole of the estates in which the tenants have been awarded compensation under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—That is so.

293. (*Chairman.*) As a general rule the tenant going out would be succeeded by another tenant, and the compensation would be paid by the incoming tenant to the outgoing man?—Yes.

294. (*Mr. Lambert.*) But that bargain would be concluded through the landlord?—No.

295. (*Chairman.*) There are a great many more than two changes of tenancy?—But I think they have been invariably settled between the outgoing and incoming tenants by valuers—merely calling in valuers. But we have had that one case under the Agricultural Holdings Act. There is one very small one pending now.

296. (*Mr. Lambert.*) You have only had two cases under the Agricultural Holdings Act upon the whole of your estates in which the tenants have been awarded compensation under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—That is so.

297. (*Chairman.*) Surely it is between the outgoing tenant and the incoming tenant?—The tenants have claimed under that Act.

298. Against the landlord?—Yes, and there is only one case.

299. I have got a very strong recollection of the Act, and my idea is that it is between the outgoing and the incoming tenant?—The outgoing tenant claims against the landlord.

300. (*Mr. Lambert.*) That is so, that the outgoing tenant would claim from the landlord?—Yes, that is my impression.

301. And you have only had one case in which the outgoing tenant has claimed from the landlord?—That is so, under the Act.

302. Are there many cases in which you have had to put in a distress for rent?—Very few indeed; there may have been one or two cases but very few; those that have occurred have been very small in number.

Difficulty in letting farms.

303. Have you had many applications for farms when you have had to let them? Have you had any difficulty in letting farms?—Frequently. I have several now that I should be glad to let.

304. In what part of the country?—The Whichwood estate, in Oxfordshire, is the worst, because it is all arable land. Again, the farm at Stagsden, in Bedfordshire, has been a very long time in hand and no one will take it.

305. And your tenants have a Crown agreement and practically they have the whole right of the shooting?—They have the whole right of the shooting.

Rate assessments.

306. (*Mr. Thomas.*) Do you know whether the assessment of those farms to the poor and other rates are reduced in proportion to the rent?—No doubt the tenants have looked after that themselves.

307. Do you employ any local men as agents or surveyors?—No, not generally.

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The Crown Surveyor.

308. Who looks after the landlords' and tenants' interest in that neighbourhood where you have got farms?—The Crown Surveyor.

309. Is the Crown Surveyor a practical agriculturist?—Certainly a practical agriculturist.

310. (*Mr. Everett.*) Were most of your tenants on lease or year by year before the depression set in?—Almost entirely on lease.

Whichwood Estate.

311. (*Mr. Elton.*) With reference to the Whichwood Estate, when was that disafforested—you did not give us the date?—Mr. Gore gave it in his evidence before the Royal Commission on Agriculture, on page 80, of the Digest and Appendix to Part I. of the Evidence taken before that Commission. He says:—"The disafforestation Act received the Royal Assent on the 8th July "1853. The Commissioners appointed under the provisions of that Act executed their award on the 13th "June 1857."

312. Then you would be able to tell me whether it was all broken up at once after the disafforesting?—Yes.

313. It was not a gradual process?—I do not know how long it took. It took several years, I think.

314. Was the tithe set about the time it was broken up, because it was changed from waste land into arable land?—There has been very little or no tithe on it, I think.

315. I think I could put it in a simpler way; you have not got the difficulty which has arisen in other cases of forest land about a very high tithe being imposed directly it has been broken up? The tithe is not very high?—There is only 121*l.* tithe on the estate.

316. You can understand that there is a very high crop the very first year after the breaking up of an old forest land, and the tithe has been a great deal too high and it has led to a great deal of difficulty in the future?—You will see on page 80 of Mr. Gore's evidence he gives a full statement as to the estate.

Expenditure on improvements.

317. (*Lord Cobham.*) I think you said that the improvements and new works have averaged 16,000*l.* a year?—A little more, I am not sure that it is not 18,000*l.*

318. I want to correct that figure. I think you included repairs to make up the 18,000*l.*?—Yes, about 15,750*l.* per annum.

319. That is for new works. Do you see any reason to suppose that that rate of expenditure would not have to be maintained for the next ten years?—Certainly, I hope it will not.

320. You think it will not?—It will not certainly.

321. It is an enormous per-centage upon the income?—You will see by the return that in the last few years, very much less has been spent.

322. How much has it been for the last year or two, can you give us that?—For instance, in 1888, it was 13,000*l.*; in 1889, 7,000*l.*; in 1890, 6,900*l.*; in 1891, 6,200*l.*; in 1892, 9,700*l.*; and in 1893, 9,200*l.*

323. Was the last expenditure some years ago in consequence of the running out of long leases?—I think drainage was what caused the highest expenditure.

Allotments.

324. Have you had a favourable experience of allotments?—Yes. Still in some instances I find that they have fallen into few hands instead of keeping to the smaller quantities.

325. You have not lost money over them?—No.

326. Is there much demand for them?—We have not had much demand lately. I had a certain demand two or three years ago. But the Crown has always had considerable acreage in allotments. I think I could give it for you.

327. I have got it I think, 425 acres?—That is so.

Difficulty in letting farms

328. (*Chairman*). I understood you to say that in the case of farms unlet, the main difficulty is in consequence of their being in bad condition when they were given up?—I do not say that that is the reason that they have not been let. I think those which are hanging on hand are not let because they are almost entirely arable farms and stiff clay land.

329. But there have been, I presume, a certain number of changes of tenancies during the last ten years?—Yes.

330. Out of the 240 tenants you speak of, taking an average farm in good condition, have you found it difficult to let such a farm during these last ten years?—No; especially in the North of England, we have had no difficulty.

331. In the South of England where a farm. I will not take the case of purely arable land in a stiff clay district, but I will take an average good farm in good condition, have you found it difficult to let?—I have found it difficult to let at the old rates. With reference to those which are in hand from the cause I have stated I have not been able to let them; but there have been very few changes.

Capital required for tenants.

332. Have you found men of capital ready to take them?—Sometimes not with the capital one would like, but a good practical man without capital is better than a man who is not practical, with capital.

333. What requirements do you generally make as regards capital?—No special requirements, but we try to ascertain that the would-be tenant has sufficient capital for the holding that he wishes to take.

334. What do you generally consider sufficient capital per acre?—I really would not like to give an opinion upon that; it is so very different in different places.

335. Taking a good fair average farm in good condition in the South of England, would you say 5*l.* or 6*l.* or 8*l.* an acre, should be the amount that the man should have?—I should sooner see him with 10*l.*; that is to start with everything.

336. To start with everything; what do you mean by that?—You so often get a man who has got something, he may have implements and a certain amount of stock coming from somewhere else, and he would not want then anything like the capital—I mean cash.

337. I understood you to say that although you have had great difficulty in that respect in past times, yet you have men ready to come in with the capital at a reduction of rent?—With the capital, with reservation, yes.

338. Has there been rather a desire to become a tenant of the Crown property?—Well, I think I may say honestly that they rather like farming under the Crown.

339. And you are prepared now to grant leases?—Certainly.

340. Even at the present rates?—Even at the present reduced rates, but I could hardly grant a long lease at the rates that might be taken on an annual tenancy.

Compensation under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

341. (*Mr. Little.*) I should like to clear up that about the valuation with reference to the outgoing and the incoming tenant. I understand that in only one case has a claim been made against the landlord in practice?—Yes.

342. But I presume in theory the incoming tenant agrees to pay whatever the landlord may be called upon to pay the outgoing tenant?—Yes.

343. And you allow the valuation to be made as between those two parties?—Yes.

344. And in only one case has a claim been made against the landlord?—Yes, against the landlord.

345. How would the tenants in the other cases, where they have not made a claim upon you, be compensated by the incoming tenant for anything in the way of cultivation and manures?—According to the valuation. I may say that we, under the agreement, usually appoint the valuer acting for the incoming tenant to act for the Crown also.

346. You appoint, but you perhaps accept the nomination of the incoming tenant or his recommendation?—Certainly, in agreement with him.

347. But the outgoing tenant receives compensation from the incoming tenant instead of you for the manures that are unexpended, the value of which is not exhausted at the time of quitting?—Yes.

348. The outgoing tenant has been compensated; he has been allowed to make his claim, and he has been compensated by the incoming tenant for such improvement as he has claimed for?—Yes, by arbitration.

349. By arbitration; after arbitration he has received what is deemed to be the value of the improvement?—That is so, certainly.

350. (*Mr. Clay.*) The fact is that you, as landlord, turn the obligation on to the incoming tenant?—With his consent by the appointment of a valuer.

351. But you make it a bargain that he is to take the outgoing tenant's compensation?—Yes.

352. (*Mr. Lambert.*) In how many cases where you have given your consent in writing, has the outgoing tenant claimed compensation from the incoming tenant under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I do not accept from the outgoing tenant. I only accept from the incoming tenant.

353. Certainly, but the outgoing tenant has never claimed compensation from you under the Agricultural Holdings Act, except in two cases?—Yes, that is so.

354. I wish to know whether you have given your consent, in writing, to the incoming tenant to pay to the outgoing tenant any compensation under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—That is settled by the valuer.

355. But you have not given your consent in writing?—I have never given any consent in writing, and I do not think the consent is required.

356. (*Mr. Dalton.*) The consent is required if the incoming tenant is going to charge you any part of this compensation that he pays to the outgoing tenant, but only in those cases, I think?—The fact is that the agreements are generally not made under the Agricultural Holdings Act, but made by the custom of the country.

Adjourned to to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

Second Day.

Friday, 10th November 1893.

PRESENT:

The RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
WALTER HUME LONG, Esq., M.P.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
FREEMAN THOMAS, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. ALFRED DE BOCK PORTER called and examined.

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357. (*Chairman.*) You are the Secretary and Financial Adviser to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, are you not?—Yes.

358. And you have been so for some years?—Yes; I was Financial Secretary from 1880 to 1888, and I have been Secretary and Financial Adviser from 1888 to the present time.

359. In that capacity, have you a general management of the estates belonging to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; or, at all events, do you superintend the acting managers?—Yes.

Acreage of estates.

360. What is the extent of the estates now vested in the Commissioners?—About 279,000 acres in possession, and about 30,000 acres in reversion.

Episcopal and capitular estates.

361. Those, I suppose, are the capitular estates which have been handed over to you under various Acts of Parliament?—And also episcopal estates. They are estates formerly belonging to the bishops and chapters, and also to the non-residentiary prebends.

362. In many cases the properties which have been under your hands have been re-vested in the bishops again?—Yes. Under the 23rd and 24th of Victoria, chapter 124, the lands of each bishop were vested in the Commissioners on a change in the See, and the Commissioners were directed to set out a permanent estate, which is to be held by the bishop to produce his statutory income at a rack rent, their incomes having been derived previously from fines, &c.

363. They were not bound to take them?—They had the option of transferring their estates to the Commissioners in exchange for an annuity, to secure to them their statutory income.

364. Have they generally exercised that option?—Yes, every one of them.

365. And taken the income?—Yes, and taken the income; the Commissioners manage the estates.

Capitular estates.

366. Then in the case of capitular estates, what is done?—There is no such option, the chapters having no power to hand them back to the Commissioners. Some of the chapters have kept the estates, and there is no parliamentary provision for handing them back.

367. In all cases, have the capitular bodies estates vested in them?—Only a portion of them.

Acreage of estates in the various counties.

368. And the result of the whole transaction is, that you are left with 270,000 acres in hand, and 30,000 acres in reversion?—Yes.

369. Are those estates spread over the different parts of the country?—Yes; they are in nearly every county in the kingdom ranging from 52,000 acres in Durham to some six acres in Shropshire.

370. Is that a Return of them?—I have a few of them—the principal of them.

371. Let me look at it (*the paper was handed to the Chairman for inspection*).

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372. From this Return it appears that in Durham there are 52,000 acres; in Yorkshire, 23,000 acres; in Lincolnshire, 22,000 acres; in Kent, 17,000 acres; in Cambridgeshire, 13,000 acres; in Worcestershire, 13,000 acres; in Wiltshire, 11,000 acres; in Somersetshire, 10,000 acres; in Nottinghamshire, 10,000 acres; and in other counties ranging from 2,700 acres up to 8,000 acres. Are those properties generally held in large estates together?—They vary very much. I have a list here of farms of over 500 acres; there are only 58 of more than 500 acres.

373. I meant to ask you whether these are properties held largely with a considerable number of farms adjoining one another?—The Commissioners' estates are not in ring fences because they belonged to different preferments; they are mostly isolated, and it is only where the Commissioners have been either buying or selling leasehold interests, with a view to consolidation, that they are at all compact; they are very much distributed for the most part.

Size of farms.

374. Then with regard to the size of the farms, what do you say?—I said that the Commissioners have only 58 farms of over 500 acres in extent.

375. Have you a considerable number of small holdings?—The Commissioners have about 3,000 holdings over 2 acres.

376. Is that a statement of the different sizes?—No, I have not got them graduated; it is such an enormous affair to get out.

377. Can you give us the kind of estate?—There are 3,000 farms of over 2 acres.

378. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Up to what limit?—We have 58 farms over 500 acres, and we have seven farms of over 1,000 acres.

Management.

379. (*Chairman.*) How are these estates managed?—The country is divided into two districts, and Messrs. Clutton are the agents for the southern district, and Messrs. Smiths, Gore, Dale, and Ingram for the northern district.

380. Are those agents gentlemen in private firms—in private business—or are they devoted exclusively to your Commission?—They act for the Crown and for private clients, but their principal business is that of the Crown and the Commissioners.

381. (*Mr. Lambert.*) May I interpose? How many holdings have you altogether; how many farms?—3,000 over 2 acres.

382. How many under?—2,674 allotment tenants.

Rental and acreage in 1880 and 1892 compared.

383. (*Chairman.*) I thought we would come to the question of allotments later. What is the rental of the estates?—The rental from the last accounts made up for the year ending 31st October 1892 is 311,238*l.*

384. (*Lord Cobham.*) Is that purely agricultural?—These are purely agricultural estates.

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385. (*Chairman.*) Can you state what the rental was in 1879?—I have got the return for the year 1880; we had then 189,000 acres in possession and the rental was 318,000*l.*

386. Since then the acreage has been increased up to what?—Up to nearly 100,000 more.

387. And the rent has gone back how much?—7,000*l.*

388. (*Lord Cobham.*) The acreage has increased by 30 per cent.?—Almost more than that; it has increased from 189,000 to 278,000 acres.

Reduction of rent.

389. (*Chairman.*) Very nearly 50 per cent. Can you state in respect of the land that there was in hand in 1880 what has been the actual per-centage of the reduction of rent?—I have made an estimate of what we ought to have received this year. Assuming the rents to have been based upon the 1880 average, we ought to have had an income of 417,000*l.* as against 311,000*l.* There is about 25 per cent. reduction on the whole.

390. Has there been a great difference in this respect in different parts of the country?—Yes, very much. I have a return of the allowances. I could not get it out for each year, but I have the aggregate of allowances from 1878 to 1892.

391. Before we come to that I would ask you a question with reference to the difference in different parts of the country?—The counties most affected are Huntingdon and Nottingham in relation to the acreage that we have there.

In Huntingdonshire.

392. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Is Huntingdon the worst of all; are you giving them to us in that order?—On a rental of 6,300*l.* per annum we have made allowances in the 14 years to the extent of 15,000*l.* in Huntingdonshire.

393. (*Chairman.*) Were those allowances in reduction of rent?—They were allowances in reduction of rent. You asked me which counties were most affected in that way.

394. Are those permanent reductions or merely abatements?—These were abatements, but many of them have settled down to permanent reductions.

395. (*Lord Cobham.*) What is the present rental?—The present rental in Huntingdonshire, including the permanent estate of the See of Peterborough, which has a large estate there, is about 6,300*l.* a year.

396. (*Chairman.*) I think you said the rental was 6,300*l.* in 1880?—If you take 6,200 acres, which is the Commissioners' own estate, leaving out that of the Bishop of Peterborough, the present rental is 4,620*l.*; the present rental of the Huntingdonshire estate as a whole is 6,300*l.*

397. I suppose there has been some addition to it?—There has been some addition.

398. I understand you are giving the difference between 1880 and 1892?—No, I cannot give you the amount of the rental, but I have got a summary of all the allowances, showing where the largest allowances have been made; I have not got each county reckoned up on the acreage of 1880, but on the present acreage. I have the rent at the present time.

399. On what basis do you state that Huntingdonshire is the worst county as far as you are aware?—Because the aggregate allowances in the 14 years ending 1892, viz., 15,000*l.* were on a rental of only 6300*l.*

In Nottinghamshire.

400. What was the next county that you mentioned, Nottinghamshire?—Nottinghamshire. There the allowances were 15,500*l.* with a rental of 9,500*l.*

401. (*Mr. Little.*) Do you mean that the 9,500*l.* is the present rent?—Yes, the present rent.

In Somerset and Lincolnshire.

402. (*Chairman.*) And what counties come next?—Somerset, where the allowances amount to 24,000*l.* on a rental of 19,000*l.* at the present time; and Lincoln, 44,000*l.* with a rental of 24,000*l.* at the present time.

403. (*Mr. Lambert.*) I suppose that in the 44,000*l.* you include the reductions of rent that have been made during the last 14 years?—No, only the abatements during the last 14 years.

Reduction of rent generally.

404. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Could you say what the rental was 14 years ago?—No, I cannot, and it would not perhaps be fair to say, because the acreage is changed every year. The Commissioners have not a fixed estate of so many acres. The acreage is constantly changing.

405. (*Chairman.*) That, of course, involves an element of error in the allowances?—Yes.

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406. Unless you know what the area was 14 years ago you cannot form any computation as to the per-centage of allowances for the purpose of comparison with other estates?—I thought this was a rough way of showing where the greatest allowances had been made.

407-8. When did the first allowances begin?—1878 was the first allowance of any kind, and that was given in Nottinghamshire.

409. Have you got any figures which show the allowances made in each year?—Yes, I have those in each county.

410. So as to give us an indication of the gradual progress of the depression?—The allowances have not gone on perhaps at the same rate, because so many rents have been permanently re-adjusted and the reductions taken in another form. It is impossible to classify them exactly. I have a statement showing the allowances in each county.

411. I was rather under the impression from what you stated before that these allowances included the reductions in rent, but from your present answer I gather that the allowances are abatements made off the agreed rents. But besides that there has been a reduction of rent?—Yes. The Commissioners were very loth, of course, to reduce their permanent rents, and for many years they have gone on making allowances, but during the last one or two years the allowances have fallen off very much and the permanent rents have been reduced.

412. Therefore the amount of the allowance does not give an indication of the full depression?—Not the whole depression.

413. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do they include arrears of rent written off?—They include arrears of rent written off.

414. (*Chairman.*) Is that a paper that you can put in showing the allowances yearly?—I do not think that this paper would be any use without particulars as to the property. It is very misleading apart from the rental. The total allowances which I have given include the rent and arrears of rent written off, making 323,000*l.* from 1878 to 1892. The largest was in the year 1882 when we allowed 45,000*l.*

415. That, as you have already said, does not include the reductions in rent?—No, because many of the modern rents are permanently reduced.

416. Therefore it gives one an imperfect idea of the changes that have taken place?—It is a very favourable view.

417. The better idea is that already given in the opening statement, namely, comparing the rents of 1880 with the present time there has been a reduction of 25 per cent. in rents?—Yes, that includes everything.

418. Is this system of making allowances in lieu of permanent reductions still going on?—No, there are not so many now. We have no tenants holding under leases, or hardly any, and nearly every rent has been re-adjusted in the course of the 14 years.

419. And you have not in the last two years been compelled to make further allowances upon those reduced rents?—Not upon the reduced rents. Only in a few instances, perhaps.

420. Could you give us an idea when the last permanent settlements of new rents were made?—They are going on from week to week at every meeting of the Board.

421. They are still going on?—They are still going on.

422. But I thought mainly they had been completed?—They have, but with such an immense number of farms, re-arrangements are going on constantly. The tendency is still downward.

423. But the great move downwards occurred a few years ago?—Yes, a few years ago.

424. And up till about two years ago, I understood?—During the last two or three years the rents have been practically permanently reduced.

In Cheshire and Lancashire.

425. Have there been any parts of the country where the reductions have not taken place, or where the reductions have been small?—In Cheshire and Lancashire there have been scarcely any reductions.

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426. And in what other counties have the reductions been small in comparison with others?—In Cumberland there has not been much reduction.

In Cumberland.

In Durham.

427. (*Lord Cobham.*) What about Durham, with its 52,000 acres?—The reductions have not been so very large there because a good deal of the land is held in Durham by the coal owners, who prefer keeping the farms in hand to paying damages arising from subsidence; and those tenants do not get as large reductions as the purely agricultural tenants.

In Yorkshire.

428. (*Chairman.*) Have you any observations to make about Yorkshire, whether the reductions have been large or small as compared with others?—In parts of Yorkshire they have been very large.

In Devonshire.

429. Then in Devonshire?—In Devonshire there has not been so much until recently. During 1887, 1888, and 1890, the rents were, to a great extent, re-adjusted, but not so much in Devonshire as in some other counties. On a rental of 16,000*l.* the aggregate allowances for the 14 years amount to 13,000*l.*

430. You cannot state what the reduction of rent has been there?—Not the permanent reduction.

Expenditure on improvements.

431. During the same period has there been a large expenditure in permanent improvements?—I have got a summary of the expenditure which has been made from the commencement of the Commission to the present time. The total sum expended on farm buildings and improvements is 1,600,000*l.*, and about 344,000*l.* in drainage.

432. Since when?—That is from 1850. Then, of course, for many years the Commission had very small estates.

433. I am specially alluding to the interval you have been speaking of since 1880. Has there been a large increase of expenditure during that period, resulting from the pressure on the tenants and the necessity of helping them in that manner?—Yes, largely helping them with new buildings, and in addition to that the Commissioners have had to defray the cost of repairs, which under ordinary circumstances would have fallen upon the tenants.

434. Can you state how much that has amounted to annually? Take the years 1878 to 1892, the expenditure upon repairs has been about 263,000*l.* Has that been a new item altogether?—No, those are estate repairs apart from the farm buildings and drainage expenditure. Beginning with 1880, the expenditure on farm buildings runs in this way:—52,000*l.*, 47,000*l.*, 46,000*l.*, 38,000*l.*, 32,000*l.*, 50,000*l.*, 45,000*l.*, 52,000*l.*, 37,000*l.*, 35,000*l.*, 40,000*l.*, 39,000*l.*, and 49,000*l.*

435. May I look at that for a moment?—There are an immense number of figures.

436. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You have not got the total?—About 550,000*l.*, that is from 1880 to 1892.

437. (*Chairman.*) Since 1880?—Since 1880.

438. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Is that 1892 inclusive?—Yes, inclusive.

439. (*Chairman.*) Is this money expended on improvements taken out of revenue account, or have you got a capital account for it?—It is taken out of income. Formerly the Commissioners used to charge it to the common fund, which is a sort of capital account, but now it is all charged to income.

440. Is that farm account kept entirely distinct from the other accounts of the Commission, house property, and mineral accounts?—It is all in one summary, called the "Rental, &c. of Estates."

441. You do not keep the farming account entirely distinct?—No.

Net income from agricultural property.

442. Could you show us what has been the aggregate receipt of net income after taking all the out-goings, improvements, and so forth, in each year?—The figures are liable to fluctuation because mineral property comes in, and there is the house property in London. I have got the whole rental, but there is the mineral property along with it.

443. Excluding the mineral property and the house property, can you show us in each year what has been the net income paid into your general funds from the farm property. As I understand, you pay for your improvements and repairs also out of income?—Yes.

444. You have got no capital account, and, therefore, one would presume that the accounts are kept separately, and that you would be able to show what are the net receipts from the farm property in each year?—I could get it out, but in the reports to Parliament the whole of the income of the Commissioners and the whole of the out-goings are shown in one account.

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445. Would it be possible to get it out without any labour?—Yes, I could get that out, but it will involve considerable labour.

446. And showing what the acreage for each year is. Of course the acreage is continually increasing or has been increasing?—I do not think I could promise to get out the acreage for each year. To get out the last year, 1892, has been very laborious work.

447. What the Commission would rather like to have is a statement of what has been the effect of the depression upon your large ownership of land, and unless we know in each year what the acreage is, and what the net receipts paid into the general funds are, there is not very much light thrown upon the subject?—I could do it roughly, not to a few acres. There has been a gradual increase by the lapsing of leases which could be added, but to go through each one of the rentals to get the acreage would be a very laborious work.

448. Without too minute accuracy, would it be possible to get a general idea of the acreage of each year, and the receipt of rent after paying all the outgoings, including improvements, and the money spent on repairs, and the allowances made?—Yes, I can do that. (*See* Appendix A., VII.) The Commissioners' property has charges on it rather different to those on estates of ordinary landowners, because we have a number of stipends paid to incumbents chargeable on the estate.

449. Those are permanent charges?—They are permanent charges amounting to between 12,000*l.* and 13,000*l.* a year.

450. But those would be fixed charges, and remain the same every year?—Yes.

451. Whereas I understand there has been a continual expenditure in the outgoings and on the improvements and a further increase due to the fact that you have been compelled to do the repairs?—Yes.

452. And beyond that the allowances and permanent reductions of rent. You take all these into account, and the net income paid into your general account must be very greatly reduced, far beyond what would appear from the reduction in rent?—The Commissioners are large holders of tithe rent charge, and their income has been very much affected by the reduction in the tithe averages, but taking tithe and agricultural depression, and the losses which have been made from some of the mineral property, we reckon our income is 200,000*l.* less than on the estimate of eight years ago it would be this year.

453. Do you mean that in respect of the 189,000 acres you anticipated some years ago that you would receive this year 200,000*l.* over the 311,000*l.*?—I reckoned that I should have 417,000*l.* a year from agricultural land instead of the 311,000*l.*

454. I think you told us that if the rental had been maintained, you would have received 417,000*l.* in rent instead of 311,000*l.*?—Yes, instead of 311,000*l.*

455. But now you say further, that, owing to outgoings of various kinds, you have received 200,000*l.* less than the estimate?—That is owing to the depreciation in tithes and to our losses in mineral property.

456. That is outside our inquiry. We do not want to go into the question of mineral property or the tithe. In confining yourself only to farm property the reduction has been about 100,000*l.*?—106,000*l.*

457. But then there is a further amount to be added to that, that is, the increased expenditure in improvements?—Yes, in improvements.

Leases.

458. You said just now that the tenants as a rule have not got leases?—No, out of the 3,000 odd tenants only about 80 have leases.

459. Were there leases at one time?—A great many.

460. When did they begin to fall in?—Since 1880 many of the tenants have come to us and asked us to relieve them of their leases; they wanted allowances to be made.

461. Did you do that?—Yes, in many cases.

462. Do you find that they do not take leases now?—None of them want to take leases now.

463. Are you prepared to give leases?—Yes, if they are asked for.

464. What length of leases do you offer?—21 years.

465. And you are prepared still to do this?—Yes.

466. Do the tenants have the right of shooting?—Yes.

Shooting rights.

467. In all cases?—In all cases.

Changes in tenancies.

468. Have there been many changes during the last 14 years in the tenancies?—Yes, far beyond the average. For the most part the Commissioners' property goes down from father to son or to some member of the family; but during the last 12 or 14 years there have been a good many changes.

469. Can you say what increased per-centage there has been?—No, I could not say the per-centage.

470. Have many tenants been sold up?—A great many.

Land in hand.

471. When these changes have taken place, have you found a difficulty in getting new tenants?—Sometimes we have had a good deal of land in hand. In 1880 we had in the northern district some 3,200 acres in hand; now we have about 800; but in the south we have 4,300 acres in hand at the present time.

472. Is that an increase over previous years in the south?—That is an increase in the south, but a considerable reduction in the north.

473. (*Mr. Little.*) What is the distinction between the south and the north, may I ask?—The country is divided by a line drawn from the north of Essex to the north of Cardiganshire.

Difficulty in letting farms.

474. (*Chairman.*) Then do I gather from that that depression has been less serious to the north of that line than in the south?—During the last few years there has been great difficulty in getting tenants for some of the larger farms in the south, and they have been thrown into hand. Two or three farms in Essex and one in Hampshire we have had in hand now for some years.

475. Have the farms been left in a very bad state by the previous tenants?—In some cases.

476. The difficulty arises, does it not, from that, in getting new tenants?—The condition of the farms now is very good, but the difficulty is to find anybody with sufficient capital to go into them.

(After a short adjournment.)

Large and small farms.

477. Can you draw any distinction between the case of large farms and small farms?—For the most part, the farms that we have in hand are large farms. The smaller farms are easily let as compared with the large farms.

478. Have you made larger reductions in the case of the larger farms than in the smaller ones?—We have.

479. May I take it generally that the result of your experience is that you think that the small farms have weathered the difficulties better than the large ones?—Undoubtedly.

480. What acreage would you call a large farm?—Over 400 acres.

481. But with regard to the farms of under 200 acres, could you draw any distinction between them and the larger farms?—Our difficulty has been mainly with the farms of over 350 acres.

482. (*Mr. Long.*) The question of small and large farms does not really affect some districts. I imagine that you would probably tell us that the large farms which caused the difficulty were in a district where small farms could not practically be created, is that so?—I have one case in point, perhaps. There is a farm at Ely with an acreage of 1,100 acres, that was let for 2,000*l.* a year in 1881. It has been reduced to 1,300*l.*; 1,000*l.*; 570*l.*; and at the present time it is let at 670*l.*

483. (*Chairman.*) That is to say, in the case of farms of very large size, I presume, the difficulty is in finding tenants with capital to take them up?—Yes; unless we make the concessions that are absolutely needed, there is the fear of having such a farm in hand.

Sub-division of farms.

484. (*Mr. Long.*) What I want to bring out is that these particularly large farms are not capable of reduction; you cannot cut them into two as you can in the grass country?—No.

485. Have you found it advisable in some cases to divide those large farms?—No, we have not; several of the farms that we have in hand are very large, and the surveyors do not seem to think that they can be cut up.

486. As a matter of fact, do you not divide any farms?—Very few; not more than, perhaps, 20 large farms; we may have cut up that number, but I do not think more than that.

487. You have got several large farms which you have been unable to cut up?—Yes.

488. Is that from its being found inexpedient to expend the capital on buildings upon them, or is it because they are better managed in their present condition?—There are two or three large Essex farms which have had very substantial buildings put upon them, and the Commissioners have been hoping to effect a letting, and not to forego the use of this large expenditure which has been made in good times, to make a provision which was then thought the best.

489. I take it that the larger expenditure on the larger farms would be rendered useless, because the expenditure would be suitable only to the larger farms?—That is so.

490. (*Mr. Long.*) I want to know whether it is or it is not the fact that in the case of those large farms that you have been speaking of the division into small farms offers no attraction to any new tenants at all; or does it offer an attraction?—I doubt very much whether, in the case of the two or three farms in Essex, if we were to cut them up further we should be able to let them.

491. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Has it been tried at all?—We have divided some 20 farms, but there has been no very large expenditure in new buildings which are inseparable from making any alterations.

Reductions of rent in Lincolnshire.

492. (*Chairman.*) Could you give us any other illustrations of great reductions in individual cases?—There is a farm in Lincolnshire, not very far from Lincoln, of 1,400 acres which was let at 2,300*l.* in 1880, and which is now let at 800*l.*

493. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) May I ask what parish that is in, or how far from the city?—Fiskerton. There is another farm in Lincolnshire, the acreage of which is 1,130 acres, and the rent in 1880 was 2,660*l.*, and it is now let at 900*l.*

Tithes.

494. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you take the tithe into consideration in giving those figures?—Those are let tithe free now.

495. And they were not before?—Very many of these large farms are not tithed, having been Ecclesiastical lands the tithe has not unfrequently been in the Commissioners' hands, and practically merged. We are landowners and tithe owners, and we have always merged our tithe where practicable.

Land in hand.

496. (*Chairman.*) Are the farms in hand mostly those very large farms?—We have one very large farm in hand, in Hampshire, about 680 acres. That has been in hand for some years; and three large farms in Essex.

497. Have you any small farms in hand?—We have two or three small farms in hand, but under very exceptional circumstances. They are not likely to be in the Commissioners' hands for long.

498. You apprehend no difficulty about those?—We apprehend no difficulty.

Steps taken to find tenants.

499. (*Mr. Long.*) Could we ascertain, with regard to the large farms in hand, what steps you have taken to find tenants?—They have been well advertised, and every endeavour has been made to find tenants.

500. That bears upon a question put just now by one of the members of the Commission, whether the system of breaking up farms had been attempted. They had been advertised, in what way?—Advertised in the local papers, and the eastern and southern ones also in the north country papers. Our agents are directly interested in finding tenants for the farms as soon as possible, because their remuneration is based upon the rents received.

501. (*Chairman.*) Where there is a farm in hand, is there no per-centage of profit?—Speaking generally, none.

502. How do you manage them?—There is a bailiff under the direct control of the surveyors, who pay constant visits.

Result of farming land in hand.

503. What has been the result of farming those farms in your own hands?—Very disastrous as regards the financial result.

504. Can you give an illustration of the losses that you have incurred in that way?—We unfortunately make a loss beyond the whole of the rent.

505. In the aggregate of any year, can you give the amount that you have lost on those farms in hand? The losses have been beyond the rent, you said?—Considerably beyond the rent.

506. When first given up, the farms are in a bad condition, but they remain in hand beyond the time when you have got them into good condition, and some of them are still in hand, although in very good condition. In those cases, have you lost money?—Yes.

507. (*Lord Cobham.*) That is charging everything to income?—Yes, everything.

508. New works?—Yes.

509. (*Chairman.*) I presume you have had some difficulty in managing those farms?—There is considerable difficulty.

510. Who are they superintended by?—By the surveyors.

511. They cannot be on the spot?—They pay constant visits to the farm, but it is not like constant supervision.

512. Have you a number of large farms to be looked after?—Yes.

513. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I suppose the Commissioners have a good farm bailiff?—They have a bailiff at each farm.

Sale of property by deferred payment.

514. (*Chairman.*) Have you effected any sales of the Church property lately?—Yes; we have sold, even during the depression, by the deferred payment system. Some time since the Commissioners adopted a plan of selling farms mostly for the first part to tenants on the instalment system—15 per cent. was paid down, and the balance was spread over a term of years, the terminable annuity extinguishing the principal and interest, the rate of interest being 3·63 per cent. (*See* Appendix A., VIII.)

515. Do they offer them to all their tenants?—Only to the tenants that they were willing to sell to. When selling by auction 15 per cent. is paid down and 85 per cent. left on mortgage.

516. Are you prepared to sell any of your property?—No, the difficulty that the Commissioners would have is that if they sold very largely they would have a difficulty in re-investing.

517. Are they bound to re-invest in land?—They are not bound to do so, but in investing in the Funds or mortgages to local authorities you can only put out a certain amount of money, and it is now hardly the time to sell wholesale.

518. But I understood that you had come to a determination to offer the farms to certain tenants?—To the tenants of certain estates.

519. Were they estates which were thought desirable to sell?—There was rather a strong wish on the part of certain tenants to buy. We began in Wales, and we sold several large estates there—altogether up to the present time we have sold about 17,000 acres for 462,000*l.*

520. When did you begin this?—It is about ten years that we have been doing it; we did not sell very much to begin with.

521. Then they have all been sold since the period of depression began?—Yes, since the depression began.

522. What has been the average rate of purchase with reference to the rent?—Between 25*l.* and 30*l.* an acre.

523. About 30*l.* an acre?—Something less than that—about 27*l.*

524. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) What term of years were the payments extended over?—They were extended over 30 years.

525. Did you consider the prices to be good?—Yes; during the recent sales by auction we have been able to get a little more than our reserve price by selling on this system, and we have had no difficulty with the purchasers in the payment of instalments.

526. When you say recent sales by auction, in this case you have sold to the public and not to the tenants?—The tenants are generally given the option of buying before the property is put up.

527. And then when they have not bought you sell by auction?—Then we sell by auction.

528. What are the last sales you have effected—in what part of the country have they been sold?—In Somersetshire, I think, the last sale took place.

529. How recently?—In the summer of this year.

530. Did you effect the sale then?—Every lot was sold.

531. At a good price?—Yes, in excess of our reserve.

532. (*Mr. Little.*) How many years' purchase on present rental?—They varied from 27*l.* to 30*l.* per acre.

533. (*Chairman.*) What was the size of the estate that you sold?—Many of them were small pieces, and it was not a compact estate that we sold.

534. Was it mostly in small holdings?—Mostly in small pieces.

535. What size of farms were they?—Some were pieces of grass, which of course fetched a good price, and some small farms with very insufficient buildings. The Commissioners sold them in order to avoid the cost that they would have to incur in providing buildings. They thought that some of the adjoining tenants might buy and hold them with their holdings under other landowners. They ranged from 5 to 10 acres up to 60 and 80 acres.

536. They were hardly cases of small farms, then?—They were comparatively small holdings.

537. Land without buildings which could be bough by adjoining landowners?—Yes.

538. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Was it grass land or arable?—Some of it was grass and some of it was both grass and arable.

539. (*Chairman.*) That would show that there is a market for the land even in these times?—If the purchasers can be assisted.

540. If facilities are offered to spread the operation of repayment over a term of years?—The Commissioners do not make any charge for the conveyance, and they will accept the balance of the purchase money without notice at any time.

541. And those facilities you consider are a great inducement to make people buy?—Yes.

542. Is it proposed to extend that further in order to sell more land?—We shall go on selling wherever we have a dispersed estate. As the properties fall into hand, we sell off the smaller pieces.

543. Is there anything else with reference to the inquiry before the Commission that you desire to bring before us?—I do not know whether the Commission want to go into anything about the allotments.

Allotments.

544. Have you given land pretty freely for allotments?—We have offered allotments in every district in which we have any property.

545. What has been the result?—In the north, the labourers are very keen in taking up allotments, but there is not so much demand, I think, in the south.

546. Are there gardens attached to the cottages in the south?—All the Commissioners' cottages have gardens attached.

547. (*Mr. Long.*) That is the universal practice in the south and west, is it not?—Yes. I do not know whether the Commission wish to know anything about the average price of allotments. They average about 3*d.* per pole.

548. (*Chairman.*) How much do you generally let, what sizes are the allotments?—Generally not exceeding quarter acre plots; there are some few acre plots, but from a quarter to half an acre and some smaller are the usual size.

549. Then you are prepared to let land for allotments wherever there is a demand?—Yes, we have a difficulty in some cases; the villagers want the best pieces of the farms, and there is an indisposition on the part of the tenants to give up the pieces against the road which are thought best for allotments, but we have endeavoured to make arrangements with our tenants wherever there is a real demand.

550. Speaking generally, you have not any difficulty, have you, with your tenants in that respect?—No.

551. (*Lord Cobham.*) Have the rents been well paid?—Very well paid.

552. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I suppose, in the North, where you say there is a demand, the demand is not by agricultural labourers, but from people who have got land adjoining their cottages?—Where there are small tradesmen, or people having other occupations.

553. I mean they are not agricultural labourers?—They are not all agricultural labourers.

554. The demand is chiefly made for garden allotments to be attached to the cottages?—Yes.

Sale of property by the Commissioners.

555. One question about the sales; I understand that you only offer land on the estates of the Commissioners, where you think you will get a sale; you do not put a large estate of some 2,000 acres into the market, but only small portions, which you think will be bought by neighbouring landowners or by the tenants?—Yes, we have been consolidating some of our estates with a view to permanent investment; those we have not offered for sale. It is the straggling properties that come in that we, for the most part, sell.

556. Do you know at all the largest acreage, not in any one lot, but when you put up one estate; have you sold a couple of thousand acres in one estate, for instance?—We have sold one estate in Wales 1,200 or 1,400 acres; these were sold to the tenants.

557. Have you sold to many tenants in England?—A few; not so many as in Wales.

558. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Do you apply the system of deferred payments to the public generally or only to the tenants?—To the tenants, if we are selling to them or to anybody who buys at auction.

559. At auction you do that?—Yes.

560. (*Chairman.*) Then it is exactly on the same terms in both cases?—On the same terms in both cases.

561. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) So that the tenants get no particular advantage; you do not offer to them a loan?—No.

Rate assessment.

562. I want to know whether it is within your knowledge that the assessments of rates have been reduced proportionately to the reduction of rents on the estates of the Commissioners?—Until the last year or so, when allowances were made, there was a great indisposition on the part of the rating authorities to make permanent reductions in rates, and that is one reason why rents have been permanently reduced, in order to assist the tenants in getting their rating reduced.

563. Have they got such reductions in rating in consequence of reductions of rents?—I think where they have had permanent reductions they have got their rating reduced.

564. (*Lord Cobham.*) And in the case of the income tax?—Yes, and in the case of the income tax.

565. (*Chairman.*) Have the assessments generally followed on reduction of rent?—I think so.

566. (*Mr. Clay.*) You have told us that small farms have been let easier than large farms?—Yes.

Large and small farms.

567. If that is the case, why have you not divided the large farms that you have in your own hand?—Because the Commissioners and their surveyors have doubted the expediency of sacrificing the large expenditure which has been made on the homestead and buildings which were considered suitable to a large farm. They would all have to be sacrificed if we cut the farm up into a number of small holdings.

568. So that it resolves itself into this, that it would not pay to build an extra steading?—It would be a serious increase in the expenditure in addition to the sacrifice of the expenditure on the large holdings.

569. You believe in small farms bringing more rent?—Generally.

570. Is that through the labour being supplied by the farmer and his family?—Yes; the farmer and his family working with their own hands.

Tithe, land-tax, and drainage rates.

571. (*Mr. Little.*) Will you tell us what is included in the rental given—whether the farms are let tithe free?—The modern rents are all let tithe free.

572. Does the landlord pay the land tax?—Yes.

573. And does he pay drainage rates?—On some farms in the Fen district the rates are divided, in others they fall solely upon the landlord.

574. And the rent is mostly a gross rent?—Yes.

575. You do the repairs?—Yes.

576. And pay the tithe rentcharge, and pay the land tax, and pay the greater part of the drainage tax?—Yes.

577. Then the per-centage of reduction shown in mere figures, viewed from the owner's point of view of what he gets, is still larger than that shown by the gross figures. If the outgoings remain very much the same, they are a larger deduction from a decreased rental than from the former rental?—That is so.

578. You were speaking of the facilities that you give to tenants. Do you charge the cost of conveyance?—Where we sell the tenants are given a free conveyance and free mortgage; they only pay the stamp duty.

579. Does it require a stamp for your mortgage?—Yes.

Allotments.

580. You said that there was a greater demand for allotments in the north than in the south. You were speaking of your arbitrary division into north and south?—That is so.

581. Is it not the fact that they are already provided to a much greater extent in the southern counties than in the north. I do not mean provided by you, but they are more common, are they not?—I think that our experience shows that we have more allotments in the north than in the south.

Expenditure on improvements.

582. The point I wanted to bring out was, that if there are more allotments provided by others, there would not be the same demand for you to provide them now. It is a matter of statistics. Then you gave us an amount of 1,600,000*l.* that had been spent in improvements on farm buildings and other improvements, and a further sum on drainage. Is it not a fact that you have had passing through your hands a number of estates that have come from the leaseholders into your hands in a very impoverished condition?—Yes; at the end of what are called the old beneficial leases, the building expenditure has been exceptionally large on that account.

583. And you were bound to hand them over to the Corporations in a good state?—Yes, but there are included the cases in which we have got back the bishops' estates, which had to be put into good order. They are practically now handed back to us, and it is only the chapter properties which have gone permanently to the chapters.

584. So that permanent expenditure includes the amount spent on various estates which are not yours now?—It does in the earlier years.

585. And which covered all the estates which came into your hands in a very bad condition, and had to be put into a good condition before the corporations were compelled to take them?—Yes.

586. Since Lord Chichester's time, 1879, have any of these life leases fallen in?—There are a few life leases still outstanding, but the bulk of the property dropped in about 10 or 15 years ago—there are still some few properties dropping in every year; there is no great bulk of property in life leases now.

587. Any account of your expenditure on permanent improvements and drainage would not be comparable with the expenditure by an ordinary landowner, on account of the exceptional circumstances under which the land comes into your hands, and the fact that you have to put it into order?—That is so.

Reduction of rent. Extreme case.

588. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I think you told us that your average reductions in rent were something like 25 per cent., and that in Lancashire and Cheshire hardly any reductions had been made. Could you tell the Commission what is the maximum reduction you have been called upon to make in the case of any particular farm?—Yes.

589. (*Chairman.*) You gave us illustrations of two or three cases of very extreme reductions?—I think, perhaps, the case in the Fens that had to be reduced in 1889 would be an example. It was originally 2,018*l.*, and it came down to 570*l.*

590. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) That is the Ely farm?—Yes.

In Lancashire and Cheshire.

591. In the case of the Lancashire and Cheshire farms can you explain why it has been unnecessary to make any reductions there?—Because of the large populations, and the great demand for dairy and other produce.

592. In fact they have not suffered so much from the depression as other parts of the country?—There is a better market.

593. Then it is in consequence of better markets?—In consequence of better markets.

594. Are they beginning to feel the depression now?—We have made some few reductions in Lancashire.

and some reductions in Cheshire, but nothing like to the extent that we have in other places.

Terms of agreements.

595. I understand that your tenants do not like leases in the present day; under what agreements do the Commissioners let their farms, do they let them under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

596. Or under agreement?—We have a simple form of agreement.

597. You have had many demands, of course, for reductions of rent; have you had at the same time any demand for changes in the form of that agreement?—We have had no complaints with respect to the stringency of the agreement; is that what you mean?

598. Yes?—We have given the tenants for the most part a free hand.

599. That is a question that I wanted to ask too, about the restrictions. You have given them a free hand?—Yes.

600. But with regard to the conditions of compensation under which they hold their farms, have you had any demand for changes in that respect?—We have had very few. We have had some cases where farms are changing hands, and the incoming tenant has not, perhaps, paid the whole of the demand to the outgoing tenant, and we have borne a part of the compensation in order to facilitate the coming in of the new man.

601. But beyond that you have not had applications for more liberal agreements?—No.

602. Or given greater advantages to the out-going tenant?—No, we have not.

603. In the case of reduction of rents, or fixing the rents in the case of new tenants, do you find on the part of the Commissioners that you are able to name your own rent, or that practically the amount of the rent rests with the tenant?—I am afraid it does to a large degree.

Competition for farms.

604. Have you any competition for farms?—In some districts even now we have competition for farms.

605. (*Chairman.*) What districts are those?—The Commissioners have the pick of the tenants because of the tenure. The tenants have the shooting rights, and people are keen to hold under the Commissioners, who ought to get the best prices and rental.

606. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) In what districts do you find the most competition?—In the great commercial centres, where there is great commercial industry in the district—for instance, in parts of Durham, close to the trading centres, the farms do not remain out of occupation for any length of time.

Reduction of rent. Extreme case.

607. In the case of this farm that you spoke of at Ely, where you have had to make that very extreme reduction, what class of farm is it? Is it arable land?—That is largely a fen farm.

608. Is it strong land?—Yes, it is strong land.

609. Is that one of the farms that have been peculiarly subject to depression?—Yes.

610. And it would be impossible to divide it with any prospect of success?—Quite so.

Agents' commission.

611. I think you said that the salary of the agents of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners was based upon the amount of the rents received?—Yes, that is so.

612. Is that not an inducement to the agents to obtain as high rents as possible?—That was our object.

613. Is that still the policy of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners?—Yes.

Sale of property.

614. With regard to the estates that you have sold, I do not know whether you explained it, if you did I did not hear it; what proportion of those estates have been sold to the tenants; are you able to tell us that?—I am afraid I have not got them distinguished here. I think out of 17,000 acres perhaps not more than 5,000 acres have been sold to tenants.

615. But you think that as much as 5,000 acres have been sold?—I think as much as 5,000 acres have been sold to tenants.

616. Have you found those tenants, as a rule, in a position to be able to pay for their farms, and at the same time to do well after they have bought them; have you any information as to the result?—We have had no defaulters in the payment of the annuity. We have had one or two applications for an extension of time, perhaps, in one or two bad years; but with the exception of giving the additional three months there has been no difficulty whatever.

617. Can you say what proportion of those estates that have been sold have been in Wales?—I should think that, perhaps, half the quantity that we sold to tenants has been in Wales.

618. That is to say, you sold some 2,500 acres of land in Wales to tenant farmers?—To tenant farmers.

619. Do you find the tenant farmers in Wales, as a rule, willing or ready to buy your estates?—They are rather keen.

620. Rather anxious to buy?—Rather anxious to buy.

621. And they have the means at their command to do so?—They can pay the deposit, and they pay the annuity regularly.

Sub-division of farms.

622. (*Mr. Long.*) I think you said just now, in answer to a question from Mr. Clay, upon the subject of breaking up big farms into small ones, that you were largely guided by the opinion of your surveyors on the spot?—That is so.

623. Do you mean the Commission to understand that practically the policy of division or of attaining the division of large farms is left to the surveyors?—Their advice is asked by the committee. The estates committee manage the property, and on that committee there are several members like Sir Michael Hicks Beach who have had great experience as landlords, and who are able to judge as to the advice offered.

624. Sir Michael Hicks Beach has only recently been upon it?—Yes; but in the past we have had Sir John Mowbray, Lord Stanhope, Lord Chichester, and the Duke of Richmond.

625. I understood you to say, in answer to Mr. Clay, that the policy of the division of big farms largely rested upon the reports of the local surveyors, and that there was no general principle which was adopted by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners as a body?—The Committee take the opinion of the surveyors on each case. Messrs. Clutton and Messrs. Smith, Gore & Co. have a large number of local agents, and they are well able to give advice on the matter.

626. In answer to Mr. Clay, who asked you why you do not endeavour to break up the big farms into small ones, your reply was that your surveyor had advised you that your expenditure upon buildings and houses had been so great that you would run the risk of losing that expenditure if you attempted to sub-divide the farms, and upon that you kept them in your hands rather than break them up?—That has been so in some cases.

627. What I wanted to get from you, is whether you did or did not attempt to divide those farms into two or more, as the case may be, and whether if you did so attempt, you had failed?—With regard to each one of the farms that we have in hand at the present time, we have asked the agents whether it would not be practicable to cut them up, or to devise some means to meet the case, because the loss arising from the farm being in hand is a serious matter.

628. But the question of loss is a question for the actual owner of the property; it is not a question for the agent?—That is so.

629. The owner must decide whether he will run the risk of loss or not; what I want to know is whether the determination not to break up the farm has been due to the advice of the surveyor or due to a definite opinion of your own that it was better to stand alone, you occupying it rather than get a tenant by breaking it up?—We have been largely influenced by the surveyors' reports undoubtedly; we have in a few cases divided farms, but, as I said before, not more than some 20.

630. Meanwhile you are aware that in the present state of the country the division of farms has been going on to a very large extent?—Yes.

631. And with some considerable success?—Yes.

Result of farming land in hand.

632. You told me, with reference to the question asked you by the Chairman about the result of your own farming operations, that the losses which have been incurred have exceeded the value of the rent. May I ask are those farming accounts made up from the point of view of an owner occupying his own land or an occupier occupying other people's land? Has there been a division in the expenses of the owner, and the expenses of the occupier? Have you simply taken the farm as farm "A," and where they used to pay 300*l.* a year rent, and now they get nothing, have

you been content with the examination of the account, or have you examined the farming account to see how much you as managing owner pay which as a tenant farmer you would not be called upon to pay?—We have looked upon it in both ways. Of course, the accounts have been kept very much treating the owner and occupier as one. We have endeavoured to write off everything in the year, and charged all expenses against the receipts of the year, and they have left a considerable deficit balance.

633. But you base your statement of loss upon one year's statement of farming account?—Not in one year because we have had some in hand for 8 or 10 years.

634. That is exactly what I want to get; is it a statement of seven years' average, or is it based upon one year?—It is based upon a seven years' average.

635. For the whole of the property?—A 10 years' average.

636. And on that basis you charged everything that you could charge to the landlord's account,—you say that the losses exceed the rent?—Very considerably.

637. After having made all legitimate charges, these properties being managed by local surveyors and by bailiffs?—Yes.

638. And, of course, including his landlord's charges? —Yes.

639. Not charging them to the farms?—No.

Allotments.

640. With reference to the allotments, I understood you to say that the Commissioners have offered allotments in every case where they have property, but that they have been taken better in the north of England than in the south of England; is it not the case that there are places where the Commissioners have property in the west of England where allotments are required and where none have been offered?—We have no knowledge of it; wherever there is a demand for allotments we consider the matter.

641. How would the demand for allotments reach the Commissioners?—They usually come by letter addressed to the Secretary of the Ecclesiastical Commission.

642. Who from?—Sometimes from the parson, and sometimes from labouring men.

643. But they must write to the Commissioners, there is no one on the spot to whom they could apply? —No.

644. Is it the practice of these surveyors to go once a month to the tenants?—They go periodically, and they hold the local audits.

645. That is for the receipt of rent?—Yes.

646. But there is nothing which answers to the agents of a private property giving weekly attendance at the estate office for the purpose of seeing tenants, and for the purpose of hearing anything the tenants may have to say, or to receive applications?—For the most part, the farms are at a distance from London, but they have the means of making it known to their sub-agents who are local men.

647. It is possible, is it not, that there may be a demand for allotments without that demand reaching you?—A circular was sent round to all the principal tenants and others, to say that the Commissioners wished it known that they were willing to let allotments wherever demanded.

648. Was that sent to all the principal tenants?—Yes, and to the clergymen and others in the district. We have told our receivers to make it as widely known as possible that we are willing to let allotments.

649. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Do you find as a whole that the breaking up of the land into allotments, entails any heavy cost on the Commissioners in the first instance?—In some cases it does. There are sometimes roads to be made, and they have to be set out, and fencing done, and there are a number of expenses at the outset.

650. Do you think as a whole that the rent for those allotments pays for that, or is there any loss?—I think it pays on the whole.

Sale of property by the Commissioners.

651. I think you said that you always allow the purchaser to leave 85 per cent—you have 15 per cent. of the purchase money paid, and an annuity of 3·63 per cent. for 30 years for the remainder?—The annuity is 5½ per cent.; the 3·63 is the interest; the sinking fund is the difference between that and the 5½ per cent.

652. Then you charge rather more than 3½ per cent. on the unpaid purchase money?—Yes, 3*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

653. Your rentals have fallen on an average 25 per cent. since 1879, had they fallen previous to that year? —No, they had gone up rather.

Reduction of rent.

654. That was the maximum?—1878 and 1879 were about the highest years.

655. How far back is it since the average rental was the same as at the present time?—That is hardly within our experience.

656. In 1850 it was not so low as now?—No.

657. What did it average then?—In 1850 the Commissioners had very few estates indeed; the bulk of their property came into possession between 1860 and 1880.

658. It is worse now than before?—It is worse now than at any time in the Commissioners' experience.

659. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Your tenants, I believe, have comparative freedom of cultivation?—Yes, that is so.

Restrictions in cultivation.

660. Are there any restrictions whatever?—No; there are clauses in the agreement which say that it shall be farmed in a proper manner, but the old restrictions which there used to be about courses, and what might and might not be done, have practically been eliminated from the modern agreements.

661. And they also have the right of shooting over the estates—the absolute right?—Yes.

662. You think that these provisions, the abolition of restrictions, and the right of shooting are of great advantage to the tenants?—Yes.

663. And the farms let more readily because of those restrictions being removed, is that so?—We think that we get the pick of the tenants on account of the freedom which they have, they are almost in the position of owners.

664. (*Lord Cobham.*) There are no restrictions as to the sale of corn and hay, are there?—They must bring back a certain amount of manure for the hay and straw, but we give them a fairly free hand. There are no reasonable requests ever refused if the tenant makes them.

Settlement of rent.

665. (*Mr. Lambert.*) You practically fix the rent, or is it let by tender?—It is not let by tender.

666. You fix the rent then?—It is by the higgling of the market.

Farms in Devonshire.

667. You spoke of Devonshire, do you get a number of applications for farms there?—If a farm is vacant in Devonshire we should be able to relet it very soon.

668. May I ask in what part you are speaking of?—Our largest estates are at Thorverton and Staverton.

Agents' commission.

669. Do you give your agents a per-centage after the deduction is made for improvements, or is that included? — It is on the rent received, not after the deductions for expenditure on improvements.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

670. Have you had any tenants quitting under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—One or two only.

671. Do you get any offers at all for the farms in hand?—We have had one or two offers, but not an offer that could be accepted.

Sub-division of farms.

672. Do you find that dividing the farms is expedient and profitable in the cases you have tried?—The few cases that we have tried have been fairly successful, but there has been a certain amount of sacrifice of capital expended upon the buildings that have been previously erected.

Rents on large and small farms.

673. How about the rent between large and small holdings: presuming the conditions are the same, the amount of land and the climate, and the markets are the same, would the rent be larger in small holdings, that is, under 100 acres, than in the holdings over that amount of acreage?—I think, perhaps, it would be.

674. So much higher upon the holdings under 100 acres?—Yes, under 100 acres.

675. Compared with, say, 20 years ago, can you say whether the rents have gone up or decreased?—They are much lower now than they have been at any time within the last 15 years.

Rates.

676. About the rates; do you think the rates have increased, say, since 1880?—There has been a large increase in the rates for school boards.

677. Do you think the general total rates—the rates that have to be paid—have increased?—Not, perhaps, in purely agricultural parishes, but where they are at all near towns they have increased very much.

Mr. A. de Bock Porter.

10 Nov. 1893.

678. Do the tenants pay the rates?—The tenants pay the rates in all cases except on the allotments.

679. Taking from, say, 1885—that would be seven years—do you think the rates in rural parishes have gone up or gone down—have they increased or decreased?—I do not know that I have looked very carefully into that. I have only noticed that we have had some very heavy rates in purely agricultural parishes where a school board has been formed. We have an increase, say, of 10*d.* or 1*s.* in the £.

Agents' commission.

680. There is one question that I did not make clear; supposing you had a farm that was producing 100*l.* a year rent, and you spent 20*l.* a year on improvements; would the agents' fees be calculated upon the 80*l.* or upon the 100*l.*?—We should hardly spend money on improvements in that way. If we were spending 100*l.* in putting up a shed, or anything of that kind, the agents' commission would not be affected by that.

681. It would not be affected by that?—No, it would not.

Allotments.

682. (*Mr. Everett.*) Are the allotments held direct from the agents or from the farmers? Who are responsible to you for paying the rent?—We have some allotments let to local authorities, but the bulk of them are let direct to the allottees.

Tenants.

683. Were most of your tenants on lease before the bad times began?—The tenants of all the larger farms held leases before 1878.

684. As a rule the farms continue in the same families, where you could keep them, generation after generation?—They went down from father to son.

685. You spoke of a large fall in the income from minerals, in what way do you receive that income, is it in royalties?—It is in royalties.

686. Does the fall arise from a fall in the prices?—No; partly from the Durham strikes of last year.

687. And circumstances of that kind?—Yes.

Rent and rates.

688. (*Lord Cobham.*) In the rent you charge for allotments, what increase would there be upon the purely agricultural rent of the land surrounding?—Only sufficient to compensate for the payment of rates and outgoings.

689. Could you calculate how much that, as a rule, would be?—Where allotments are close to a town they need a very much higher price, because the rates are very much higher in the urban districts, but the average is about 3*d.* a pole.

690. I suppose you mean taking the rates?—If it is let at 43*s.* an acre on the average, it would mean that the rates would be about 10*s.* of that—rates and outgoings. There is a certain amount of loss, owing to vacancies.

691. And increased cost of management?—And increased cost of management.

Lowest rent per acre.

692. What is the lowest rent that you are getting from any one farm—the rate per acre?—About 5*s.*

693. What is your policy with regard to the buildings on a farm of that sort? Do you incur any expenditure at all?—As little as possible.

694. But you do spend money—you continue spending money?—But we are trying to do it as economically as we possibly can. We must erect the necessary buildings for a man to carry on his business.

Sale of property by the Commissioners.

695. With regard to the mortgages on the land sold by you, do you consider that you get much better prices in consequence of that system?—I think so.

696. And that you get a good deal of land sold which otherwise would not be sold?—Yes.

697. You have no losses under that system at present?—None whatever.

698. I think the Chairman asked you to send in some information with regard to the net rental. If you could give the acreage, the gross rent, the maintenance and management allowances, and other outgoings and net rental for each of the last 10 years, we should be obliged?—I will try to get that out. (*See* Appendix A., VII.)

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to Thursday next, at 12 o'clock.

Third Day.

Friday, 17th November 1893.

PRESENT:

The RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.

JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
WALTER HUME LONG, Esq., M.P.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*

R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
FREEMAN THOMAS, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. WILLIAM LAMBE HUSKINSON called and examined.

Mr. W. L. Huskinson.

17 Nov. 1893.

699. (*Chairman.*) You are a land agent and farmer in Nottinghamshire, are you not?—I am.

700. You succeeded your father in that business a few years ago?—I was in partnership with him for 20 years, and succeeded to the business on his death in 1887.

Agricultural depression before 1880.

701. Your father gave some very valuable evidence before the Duke of Richmond's Commission in 1880, and the present Commission desire to ask you to supplement that evidence with information as to the condition of the estates that you manage, and the effects of agricultural depression in the interval, so far as your experience will enable you to throw light upon the subject?—I may say generally that the evidence given by my late father in 1880 was from facts prepared by us at that time referring mainly to the red clays of Nottinghamshire; and I put in merely for reference a paper on the "Present Depression in English Agriculture: Its real and assumed causes" that I read before the Institution of Surveyors in their Session 1879–80, giving really the facts upon which my father gave evidence up to 1880 (*handing in the same*). It is merely evidence given by my late father in a more systematised form. The result of his evidence given generally and broadly at that time was that the causes of the depression were the extremely ungenial seasons that we had had preceding the inquiry of 1880. There was no very great complaint at all about the prices, but it was entirely owing, as a rule, to the extreme severity of the seasons, particularly to the rainfall, which told with very great severity on the clay lands of the country. The general effect was not exhibited at that time in the way of rent reductions, but several years afterwards, in certain cases, properties went on for seven or eight years after that

Commission at something like the old rents with 10 per cent. and 15 per cent. returns. But since that time I have had to go through a revision of the rents in Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Huntingdonshire.

Acreage.

702. What is the total acreage that you manage?—It will be something like between 50,000 and 60,000 acres; but I shall be able to give, without mentioning any names, the rent shortly of 40,000 acres, showing the recent reductions of rent, and the different reductions on the different descriptions of soil.

Reductions of rent.

703. Have you found very great variations in respect of the deductions?—Very great indeed. Dealing with the estates that I have the management of, it is something like from 14 per cent. to between 50 and 60 per cent. I may state that my evidence would run in two directions in accordance with the wish of the Commission that I should supplement my father's evidence of 1880. One, more especially referring to the farm which we farmed, of which I have the details for 30 or 40 years past; and the other with reference to the experience gained in the different counties where we have estates to manage as confirming that experience. I may say with regard to the district that I live in, the farm which we farmed is in the Keuper division of the Red Sandstone, which varies in the southern part from about 100 ft. above the level of the sea, to 200 or 350 ft., and varying from a thin clay on the hill sides to a very fair loam down in the valleys.

Description of farm.

704. What is the size of the farm?—We used then to farm about 800 acres, and I farmed about 300 acres to Lady Day, 1892.

Condition of land since 1882.

705. What has been the result of your experience?—The result has been, since the Duke of Richmond's inquiry, that whereas the seasons up to that time had told very severely upon every description of land, that has been quite altered so far as we are concerned and we are practically put in the same position as we were before. The grass has come round in quality, and, as to the arable, it was never better. Therefore so far as ungenial seasons are concerned, we have recovered at the present moment.

706. On the whole the seasons have been good since 1882?—Certainly they have, both for grass and plough. We were never in a better state, with regard to the quality of the land, than we are now. The effects of the bad seasons are entirely done away with.

707. Do your observations apply to the last year, or two years?—The Duke of Richmond's Commission was held in 1880; the years 1882 and 1883, were bad seasons, and the four or five years which succeeded, until 1887, were a great improvement, and helped us out of our difficulties and improved our grass, and it has been a progressive improvement. I do not think that the quality of the grass and plough land, naturally, was ever better than it is at the present moment.

708. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Since what year was that?—Since 1884. 1882 and 1883 were bad years.

Description of farm.

709. (*Chairman.*) Is your farm an arable farm?—It would be two thirds arable, and one third grass.

710. Do you grow wheat on it?—All descriptions: wheat, barley and oats, and the yield of wheat upon that land has thoroughly come back again; that is to say, in 1887 we had five quarter per acre saleable, and therefore we have nothing to complain of as regards the land.

Low prices.

711. Have you suffered during the last year at all in any way?—Yes, although the seasons have put the land into proper form, since the inquiry in 1880, prices have been gradually going down.

The drought of 1893.

712. Have you suffered this last season from the drought?—Well, the hay-crop of course is a thin one, in that sense we have suffered. The barley crop has been injured with the double growth, and a double growth makes it unfit for malting purposes when otherwise it would be a good crop.

713. Can you say what the condition of agriculture is in Nottinghamshire?—I should put it broadly that, very roughly, north of the Trent, and south of the Trent—that is to say, the Nottingham Forest land which is the Bunter Division—on the light lands they have had a fairly good year, fairly good turnips and crops; but south of Grantham, and round Melton Mowbray, the drought has told severely.

714. Are you north of the Trent?—I am north of the Trent; we have not had much to complain of, saving the loss owing to the thin hay crop, and the inconvenience in certain places owing to want of water.

715. You cannot say that since 1882 you have suffered from the seasons?—We cannot say that we have suffered from the seasons. I look upon this as an exceptional season.

Effect of bad seasons.

716. Your farm has improved and the yield is good?—The effect of the bad seasons is entirely done away with since the last Commission sat.

717. Your father stated before the Commission of 1880 that during the previous five years two-thirds of the losses were owing to the bad seasons and one-third to the low prices. What do you say as to that?—That was so, roughly.

718. Therefore, in your opinion, the depression up to 1880 was mainly due to the bad seasons?—It was mainly due to the bad seasons and ungenial seasons.

Low prices.

719. Is it your experience that the profits of the farm have increased?—That is quite another story, though the land has got round, saving this last year of drought, the result financially has certainly not been good because every description of produce has gone down very considerably. There are hardly any exceptions except perhaps butter, and that is a special case. It is not very much made in the locality in which I live. The farmers living in the valleys having grass land and devoting themselves specially to butter have done very well and do not complain much. It is a peculiar business: the ordinary farmer sends his butter to the market by the carrier, and pays 2*d.* a lb. to him to dispose of it for what he can get for it; it does not mean much profit to the farmer. But the man who devotes his attention to making butter gets a good price for it, and he has special customers and makes from 2*d.* to 4*d.* per lb. more than his neighbours do who send by the carrier.

720. That is not your business?—No, that is not my business. So far as our own farm is concerned the seasons hit us very hardly from 1875 to 1883, but the land has been thoroughly rectified during the last seven or eight years.

721. Will you give the Commission the result of your experience as regards the profits of your farm during the interval since 1880?—They have been very considerably worse really; the price of wheat has gone down very largely. I have got here the actual prices that I have sold at which will show fairly in a nutshell what has happened in that way. In 1883, which was shortly after the Commission sat, we sold all our wheat at an average of 42*s.* per quarter all round. In 1884 it averaged 39*s.* or about 2*l.* per quarter. This year 30*s.* would be a high price. It would not make that now in the market. I could give you the figures through each year if the Commission would like to have them.

722. I presume the fall in wheat is greater than in other cereals?—It is greater than barley and oats, but wheat has been very largely reduced in price. Then at the same time to go to another branch, at the time the last Commission was sitting we were selling beef to the butcher at 9*s.* 6*d.* and 10*s.* per stone, and down to the years 1883 and 1884.

723. What was the weight of that stone?—The imperial stone of 14 lbs.

724. What is the price of beef now?—The best slaughtered beef would be worth about 8*s.* per stone.

725. Is that a fair average for the last two or three years, or is it exceptionally low at the present time?—That would be a fair average for the last two years.

726. (*Mr. Giffen.*) What do you say is the price now?—The best slaughtered beef is 8*s.* per stone. But there is not the same power of getting at the price accurately for the last few years, and the reason is that they so commonly send it to auctions, and it is then an estimate of the weight of the beast for the price that is got for it. What I am quoting is what we were getting for the beast absolutely sold by the stone.

727. That is the stone of 14 lbs.?—Yes.

Cost and quality of labour.

728. (*Chairman.*) Is there any direction in which you have found reductions of expenses?—I cannot say that we have found that there have been reductions of expense. Labour increases, and that is one item, and the evidence given by my father was rather peculiar at that time, but at the same time it was perfectly accurate, and I got out the facts and figures myself, and the result was that the increase of labour at that period with the use of labour-saving machines and from one cause and another the absolute price per acre had not seriously very much increased. Supplementing that evidence now, within the last 10 years I should say

the class of labour which we had then was very good, but it has died out, and the class of labour that we have to deal with now is of a secondary quality, and even if you give the same rate on the average per week you do not get the same quality of labour; and that difficulty is likely to be still further increased because, I am sorry to say, that all our young people are leaving us for the towns.

729. Are you giving the same rate of wages as you were giving 12 years ago?—To be perfectly accurate, it is best to confine myself to the parish where I live. The labour varies as we approach the colliery districts on the west, and as we get to the agricultural districts on the east. It is purely an agricultural district that I live in, but at the same time it is slightly under the influence of being too near large populations and towns. We used to give in the old days 10*s.* per week, and have paid as high as 16*s.* 6*d.*, but the result of the inquiry showed that in the use of labour-saving machines the net price per acre was not greater with a higher rate of wage than with the lower. Since then the current rate for labour is about 15*s.* per week. The highest we paid was 16*s.* 6*d.* per week.

730. I presume you keep accurate accounts?—Yes.

Diminished farming operations.

731. I do not want to be inquisitive?—I am perfectly ready to give the result. The result has been that we have been obliged to give up such land as we rented from other proprietors, and we have reduced our own farming very largely.

732. You have reduced the extent of your own farming operations?—Yes; but there is another reason for that, that during the depression my time has been greatly taken up with looking after the lands that we have in hand, and, therefore, we could not give attention to the two things at one time. I farmed up to 1892.

733. Do you rent your farm?—Up to 1891 I farmed about 250 acres of my own, and I rented 50 acres of a proprietor for whom I am agent. Previous to that we had 874 acres.

Rent on good land.

734. Have you made your rent on your own land?—Yes, we have made a rent, but not the rent that one would hope to get.

735. But you have made a rent?—Yes, a rent.

736. After paying interest on the capital?—Yes; but the land I own is extremely good. It is taking the kernel out of the rest of the land. It is the grass land in the valley; it is well-watered loam land, which is of excellent quality for either grass or plough. The general result has not been favourable.

737. It is interesting to know that on really good land you have made a rent?—Yes, we have made a rent, but it is so unsatisfactory that I should not care to go on with it.

738. You would not care to go on with it?—No, I should not; it may be owing to the fact that I have not had time personally to look after it, because I have been looking after my employer's estates.

Management.

739. Did you manage your land with a bailiff?—Yes, and when my bailiff died, I set about curtailing the amount of land I farmed at once, because in an experience of 30 years I have had a great many bailiffs, good and bad ones, and the trouble and difficulty of getting a good one was such that I could not again face the trouble as I had other work to attend to.

Tithe.

740. Are there tithes in your parish?—We have none in our parish; they were commuted under the Inclosure Act, saving a few woodlands.

Rates.

741. What about the rates and taxes?—The rates are fairly low, 1*s.* 10*d.* in the £, but I ought to say that it is an extremely favourable sample of a parish. Immediately over the stream to the west you get into an urban union where the rates are very much heavier, and I ought to say, further, that we are approaching a period when we shall have higher rates all round. In my own union the Public Health Act, so far as the sewage of the village is concerned, is a dead letter, but it is now beginning to move, and of course the rates will be heavier when it comes into operation.

742. Comparing the present time with 1880, how much higher are the rates now?—Twopence in the £. it is a very favourable union to quote, we have varied very little.

743. You have no school board rate, have you?—We have no school board rate and no sanitary rate; it is purely rural. East of Newark there are 14 schemes of sewerage actually carried out. In the Union west I hear that there is to be spent about 50,000*l.* or 60,000*l.* in sanitary arrangements, and it is perfectly certain that before long our Union will come under the same condition. At the present time in our own village we have an engineer reporting upon a scheme which will cost from 300*l.* to 400*l.*

744. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Is that variation in the rates that you spoke of an increase or a decrease of 2*d.* in the £?—An increase.

Cause of the depression.

745. (*Chairman.*) Have you now told us all that you desire about your own farming experience?—Well, I wish to convey in a nutshell this: that up to the last Commission it was purely bad seasons which caused the depression. Since then we have had better seasons, and it is now entirely a question of price.

Changes in cultivation.

746. Have you converted any of the arable land into grass?—Yes, we have, very considerably, partially on our farm, and also, on the land of employers, where they have the same description of land. That will help posterity in the future, but it will be no great help to the actual proprietor or farmer.

747. I am referring to your own farm. Did you lay down any grass?—Yes, we did, one field on the hillside and another in the valley, where there is good rich loam, but you can hardly tell this in six or seven years from old turf. On the hillsides some were converted nearly 20 years ago, but it is still very visible that it has been laid down, and that it is not old turf.

748. I mean in the last 12 years have you laid down any grass?—Not to a great extent on the farm, but we did seed largely. We laid down seeds temporarily and then ploughed them up again.

749. Have you more or less wheat?—You cannot do without growing some wheat, but the real reason for not growing so much wheat is on account of the low price.

Effect of the depression.

750. Turning from your farm to your experience as an agent, will you state to the Commission what that has been?—Broadly, I may say that from the time when the depression began to the present moment it has hit nearly every description of farm in turn with which I have got to deal.

751. Is that to the north or the south of the Trent?—Nottinghamshire, mainly to the north. I have some on both sides. Leicestershire and Huntingdonshire would be south of the Trent and the Lincolnshire wolds would be on the east.

Acreage.

752. Would you mind stating the acreage of the principal estates?—I will give you that to the extent of about 40,000 acres. There would be 50,000 or 60,000 acres of the whole of the estates. I have got the particulars of the rent of 40,000 acres. Up to the date of the last Commission, the arable farmer on the strong land was the man who was mainly hit, and suffer he did most terribly. Our red clays are a very fair type of the midland clays, and though not so strong they suffered very terribly from excess of water, and they were very much crippled during that period. From 1880 to 1882 Leicestershire farmers began to be hit, owing to the sheep rot, and their capital was eaten into.

Condition of agriculture.

753. Was that the result of wet seasons?—It was the result of wet seasons; they were very much crippled in that district. Of course, in the wolds of Lincolnshire the wool is a serious item; it is very much a sheep country, and is thoroughly adapted for sheep farming, and the decrease in the cereals and wool has been a very serious thing for them. And now the class of tenants that have hitherto gone on all right—the little cottagers and smaller tenants who farm the grass land in the valleys—have naturally been very hard hit by the drought, because they have no hay crop to keep the stock in winter, and they are too poor to buy artificial food, and they have been obliged to sell at great loss.

754. You are taking this last year, are you not?—This year; they are hit this year. The little people who had no arrears and who occupied good farms in the valleys are now in difficulties.

755. Up to last year they were all right?—Up to last year they got on with a small reduction, and were quite satisfied with the small reduction.

Estate in Huntingdonshire.

756. Will you state the acreage in the different parts of the country?—Yes, I will put them in this way: I have in Huntingdonshire about 2,500 acres, and for some series of years there was a good deal in hand that we could not let—that is since 1880.

Mr. W. L. Huskisson.

17 Nov. 1893.

Reduction of rent.

757. What was the rent in 1880 of those 2,500 acres?—Well, I could hardly give you that for this reason, that it involves cottages and all sorts of things. I have taken simply farms which include the bulk of the farming land, and there is a reduction there. I was going to say that although those farms were in hand up to two years ago, I have succeeded in letting them all but one, and they are all now tenanted but one farm. The result has been that from the old price there has been a reduction of 42 per cent.

758. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Since what year?—It is mainly since 1880. I think a little before.

759. (*Chairman.*) Are they fen lands?—They are just above the fens; it is upland, strong clay land, a good clay of its kind.

760. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Will you state the average rent per acre?—The lowest would be 15*s.*, and the highest 18*s.* 6*d.*, but I may say that I have had notice from three tenants, which probably means a further reduction of rent.

761. (*Chairman.*) What was the rent 12 years ago?—42 per cent. more than that. I have not got it exactly per acre.

762. You said you were able to let these farms with one exception two or three years ago?—I may say generally that two years ago there seemed to be a recovery slightly, that is to say, I noticed that I began to close up all the farms, and could let everything very fairly up to this year, except large farms of from 300 to 400 acres. All the smaller ones began to close up, and at that time the amount in hand upon this particular Huntingdonshire estate was closed with the exception of one very large farm.

Large and small farms compared.

763. Do the small farmers stand the depression better than the larger ones?—I would not put it in that way. Thinking it well over I do not think that they would altogether, but there is a greater run upon the small farms.

764. Their capital would not allow them to take the larger farms?—We had four or five years ago some large farms in hand in Nottinghamshire only vacant from their size.

Sub-division of farms.

765. Did you break up the large farms into smaller farms?—Wherever they have been made large by the amalgamation of two or three, there were two or more homesteads, and we have divided them where we possibly could; but, of course, in many cases the house was made for a larger description of farm, and in that case it is impossible to divide it into smaller farms.

766. Was the breaking up attended with any expense?—Most certainly.

767. But up to two years ago, or about two years ago you found that you were able to let the farms?—No. It was about two years ago that I began to let them; previous to that, for four or five years, I had four in hand.

768. Do you find tenants with capital?—That is an extremely difficult thing to do. We make the best inquiries we can, and take every possible care; but, at the same time, I must confess we often get very much deceived. Taking this very estate I have two cases where the tenant-right is not paid at the present moment.

769. Where the incoming man has not paid the outgoing man?—Yes, and we have been obliged to let it stand over, taking a note of hand, and go on as well as we can.

Estate in Derbyshire.

770. Now, will you pass on to some other estate?—I take another of an entirely different description. The second case is one in Derbyshire, a small one but a very useful one, on the magnesian limestone, close to the borders of Nottinghamshire, about one-third grass and two-thirds plough.

771. What is the size of the estate?—It is a small estate of about 400 acres, consisting of three farms.

772. What is your experience there?—My experience there is that we have got off with a 14 per cent. reduction. It is very nice turnip and barley land, and the grass is useful; it is not first class, but it is a useful country and easy land to cultivate.

773. Is it mainly arable?—It is two-thirds arable—all the farms are.

774. What does it grow; does it grow wheat?—Anything; wheat and barley—an excellent quality of barley; and good turnips, and you can feed sheep upon them.

Mr. W. L. Huskisson.

17 Nov. 1893.

Reduction in rent.

775. And there the reduction has been what?—About 14 per cent.

776. (*Lord Cobham.*) Have you got good access to the markets there?—Very good access to the markets.

777. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) And access to the railway?—Yes.

778. (*Chairman.*) And the farmers are doing fairly well with the reduction, are they?—I cannot speak very hopefully altogether even there; we have changes, and I do not think they are quite satisfactory.

779. When did you make the reduction?—The reductions would take place, I should think, about 1882 and 1883.

780. There has been no reduction since?—None since. I might say, perhaps, to finish that property, that I have had notice from one of the tenants, but we have agreed to go on with a reduction of 10 per cent., but that is temporary because it is an extremely bad year; it is 10 per cent. for the year, and we are both to see how it goes on.

Reduction of rent and rates.

781. Have these been reductions or abatements?—In 99 cases out of 100 the whole of the returns of the old days have been converted into permanent reductions of rent; the reason of that was, and the tenants pressed it very strongly, that the rating authorities rated them upon their full rent, which we did not get; this was so, and a farmer would say, "Why "should I be rated on a rent which you do not get, "and I do not pay, and yet I am assessed at the full "amount."

782. That is an argument against temporary reductions, that the assessment authorities do not take into account the abatements, but only reduce the rates where there has been a permanent reduction on the old rent?—Yes, and that was pressed very strongly upon us, they thought it was a good way to get out of paying the rates. As we gained, and the tenant gained, we made them permanent reductions, and in 99 cases out of 100 they have been made into permanent reductions, and what they have got now are permanent reductions of rent.

783. Has there been any outlay of capital on this estate?—Yes; but I will mention that more especially when I come to the next.

784. (*Mr. Giffen.*) What is the average rent per acre?—30*s.*; and 27*s.* would be the lowest.

Condition of agriculture in Derbyshire.

785. (*Chairman.*) You cannot say that this special district has suffered, can you?—No. It has not suffered; it will grow either stock or cereals. It is rather a special case. The next case I would mention would be one in Lincolnshire, an estate on the wolds of Lincolnshire of about 2,700 acres. It is divided into seven farms. Matters continued there steadily up to about the date of my father's death in 1887, and the reason was that they are all men of substance and capital, and they bore the loss for some considerable period without troubling the proprietor.

Estate in Lincolnshire.

786. Do they pay the old rent?—They paid the old rent.

Reduction of rent.

787. What were the rents?—They would average 30*s.* per acre probably in the old days.

788. Did they get through the bad period up to 1882?—There were temporary returns made according to circumstances up to 1887, then there was a permanent reduction of rent all round, and since then it has been rather a serious case all through.

789. What per-centage of reductions?—On the wolds of Lincolnshire the per-centage of reduction has been 40 per cent., and we have got off fairly well, better than our neighbours around. It is an old family estate, and the best relations exist between the tenants and the proprietors. The tenants are all men of substance, but in addition to the permanent reduction of 40 per cent., we have had since then a very considerable expenditure to make in the way of additional accommodation for the tenants. So great was this expenditure that I suggested to the proprietor that it was too much for him to fairly and equitably bear, and I suggested that he should apply to the trustees of the settlement under the Settled Land Act of 1882. He had put up new buildings and new cottages, and those were distinguished from common repairs, and I suggested that he should go to the trustees of the settlement to recoup himself for the outlay.

Expenditure on improvements.

790. Did he succeed?—It is now before the courts.

791. With a view of throwing it off the life interest?—That is so; which we can do readily now where it is a fair case.

792. Would the reduction of rent in your view enable you to keep the tenants?—Yes, they are all there, and we should be sorry indeed to lose them, because they are all good men. But I have had in one case a further reduction there. We shall have to expend in any case 400*l.* or 500*l.*, one has hope of getting it from the trustees under the Act of 1882, and I shall be obliged to reduce the rent in that case a couple of shillings per acre. The tenant stands now at 20*s.*, and he will stand, probably, at 18*s.*

793. What is the nature of the farm?—The whole of the estate is high-lying, or 300 to 400 feet above the sea, on the chalk formation. It alternates with clay and loam, and there is some very nice sheep and turnip land, and beautiful barley land, and it also grows wheat. The only drawback to it is that the wolds of Lincolnshire are very often swept with a storm of hailstones in July and August, against which they insure.

794. What has been the outlay in improvements upon that property?—When it is completed, if I might speak with regard to the application now before the court, the expenditure would be 2,000*l.* since 1887.

795. Is it 2,000*l.* on the whole estate or on that one farm only?—It would be mainly on three farms.

796. That is the aggregate of the whole estate?—Yes.

797. That is about one year's rent reduced?—Yes.

798. (*Mr. Long.*) What is the acreage of that farm where you have spent 500*l.* and reduced the rent 2*s.* per acre?—It is 502 acres.

799. (*Chairman.*) What is the nature of the improvements?—The nature of the improvements is, first of all, in cottages for labourers; secondly, in extra sheds for the protection of the cattle in the yards; thirdly, for improved stables, the old ones being condemned by the veterinary surgeon of the sanitary authority; and, fourthly, an additional cart shed, and a granary (which has never been on that farm in a fit form), and also drainage.

800. And that expenditure has been for the purpose of keeping the tenants?—Entirely for the purpose of keeping the tenants.

801. Have they suffered severely during the last year?—No. I do not think that the wolds of Lincolnshire have suffered very severely.

802. What do you speak of; is it mainly the reduction of prices?—Mainly the reduction of prices.

Drainage from hailstones.

803. The average return during the last few years?—Precisely so; one farm has suffered very severely, because of the hailstones in August. In this case the tenant was uninsured.

804. That is an exceptional case?—The others suffered too, but they were insured; they insure for 6*d.* per acre, I think it is, which helps to repair the damage. It is a special thing, and it is a very terrible thing to witness. I have seen a barley field of 90 acres—a most beautiful sight to a farmer's eyes—in the morning, and in the evening I have seen it as though a regiment of cavalry had been careering all over it.

805. But that can be insured against?—Yes, in nine cases out of 10 that is so. The next case would be also on the wolds of Lincolnshire, some distance away.

806. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) May I ask on what part of the wolds this farm you have been speaking about is?—It would be north of Louth.

Reduction of rent.

807. (*Chairman.*) Before we pass from that, do you apprehend, with the exception of that farm of 500 acres which you have just mentioned, any further reductions or not?—We stand just now at the parting of the ways; we do not know whether the prices we are suffering from are really to be permanent.

808. Has wheat formed an important part of the produce?—Wheat has formed an important part of the produce, but wool, also, forms a very important part.

System of cultivation.

809. Have they put down very much land into grass?—Not there; but they do, as a matter of custom, seed in courses; they lay down for a couple of years and then plough it again.

Size of farm.

810. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) You said some small tenants on these farms in Lincolnshire suffered equally with the larger farmers?—It is not a case where we have any number of small tenants, it is mainly a district of large farms, it being admirably suited for them. The only cases of small tenants are really the village workmen; that is to say, the blacksmith and the carpenter, and, therefore, it is hardly worth while speaking of. There are only two. We have made a considerable return also to them, and we have rebuilt the carpenter's shop for him.

811. (*Chairman.*) But the farms are large?—The farms are large. I may say that one is 440 acres, the next is 800 acres, and the next is 472 acres. The one specially referred to is 502 acres; the next one is 427 acres, and, with the carpenter's and the blacksmith's holdings, that makes the estate.

Other farms in Lincolnshire.

812. Will you go on to the next estate, please?—The next estate would be 10 or 12 miles nearer Caistor, that is, an estate of 894 acres occupied in two farms, one of 714 acres, and the other 135 acres. There the reduction has been very much greater than upon the one I have previously referred to.

Reduction of rent.

813 What is the reduction there?—59 per cent. on the old prices.

814. What was the rent to start with?—The whole estate was 1,465*l.*, and now it is 600*l.*, if it were paid. I might say on the last estate I mentioned on the wolds we have no arrears whatever. We never know such a thing as arrears.

815. Even now?—Not even now.

816. And on this estate?—On this estate I would distinguish the 135 acres as at a very low rent. It is moorland, it drips away from the slopes, and there is a good deal of sand and moor in it. That is without arrear; but the larger farm is largely in arrear. It is a peculiar case in the sense that the man got into difficulties, and we have not wished to be harsh with him or to part with him, as that 714 acres would be difficult to let. Therefore, to some extent we have larger arrears going on.

817. When did the reductions begin in that case?—It would be in about 1887 or 1888.

818. The rent would be a high one?—But previous to that he was getting into arrears.

819. The rent in that case approaching 2*l.* an acre?—Yes, it is a high rent. Of course it has hit high rents more severely. It is a very good wold farm and grows excellent cereals and nice grass.

820. And it is now under 1*l.* an acre?—It is 15*s.* per acre.

821. Has there been an outlay upon that?—No, the buildings and the houses have been in good order, there is nothing special but ordinary common repairs.

822. (*Mr. Elton.*) What is the present rent?—The present rent is 600*l.*; the large farm is 16*s.* per acre, and that is the bulk of it.

823. (*Chairman.*) On the large farm there are peculiar difficulties?—That is so.

824. And you have made an exceptionally large reduction in order to suit it?—We have.

825. Do you think you have succeeded?—I may say that with the low rent he pays we have arrears even on that lower scale; we are not in a very hopeful state about it.

826. Is it an arable farm?—It is mainly arable land, two-thirds of it. It is not land that would go to grass, the wold part of it; it is very nice land for growing cereals, turnips, wheat and sheep.

827. Does it grow wheat?—Yes, it grows wheat.

Estate in Leicestershire.

828. What is the next case?—The next case is grass land mainly, grass within five miles of Leicester.

Reduction of rent.

829. What size is it?—The estate is 1,600 acres, and our reduction there is 20 per cent. I may say that it is all let.

830. When did the reduction begin there?—It began there about 1886 or 1888.

831. Was there no reduction?—There were temporary returns previously, but no change in the rent till that period.

832. Did they suffer much in the period spoken of by your father or not?—Yes, they did, certainly. It is not a district that grows wheat; their arable land is entirely subordinate to their grass, but they had suffered very much by their grass largely deteriorating. They had also suffered from the sheep-rot of 1881 and 1882, I think it was.

833. Has the land recovered?—It has perfectly recovered, but I am afraid the tenants have not recovered their financial condition yet.

834. What is the rental of this estate of 1,600 acres?—The lowest farm would be 20*s.* and the highest 32*s.* 6*d.* per acre.

835. The average would be about 25*s.*?—Something of that sort, and we have got off with a return of 20 per cent., and I do not think we have anything particularly unsound there.

836. Has that reduction been sufficient?—I think we shall have an awkward rent audit; it has been extremely dry, and there has been no grass and no hay.

837. But this would be an exceptional year, with the drought?—Yes, otherwise I have no reason to fear the sound condition of that property at all. I should say it is about two-thirds grass and one-third plough; the plough is quite subordinate to the grass.

Size of farms.

838. What size do the farms run there?—They would run from 150 acres to 300 acres.

839. Then they are not large farms?—No, they are not large farms; they are grazing farms. It is in higher lands of Leicestershire—it is not in the valley at all—it is 400 or 500 feet above the sea.

840. Do the farmers make money?—It is not all absolutely farming, although they do attend to it thoroughly. One of them is a well-known horse dealer; they buy and sell horses and make money in that way.

841. Have you had any outlay there?—Yes.

842. Considerable?—Not considerable, because it has been kept in good order.

Other farms in Leicestershire.

843. Will you now go on to another estate?—The next estate I would take is also in Leicestershire, but on lower ground. I could give the particulars of the five farms there, which run from a small farm of 80 acres up to a farm of 300 acres. We do not often get much above 300 acres in Leicestershire. Two-thirds of it is grass and one-third plough, the plough being subordinate to the grass. There is some very good grazing land indeed, but there is also some poorish land.

844. What is the acreage there?—The whole estate is 1,848 acres, but I gave the particulars of five of the principal farms, making 888 acres.

Reduction of rent.

845. What was the rent some years ago?—The rent of these particular farms, which I got as being typical (and which is the best evidence I can give in the short notice that I have had), in 1877 it was 1,790*l.*, and it is now 1,306*l.* That is 27 per cent. reduction.

846. When did the reductions begin there?—We began in 1886 and 1888.

847. Were those temporary returns?—Yes; they would be very confusing and very difficult, but they were averaged from year to year as the circumstances demanded.

848. Is there an all-round reduction?—Twenty-seven per cent. is an all round reduction, each farm varying greatly.

Tithe.

849. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are you including tithes in talking of those amendments?—You ask me about tithes; many of those estates that I have hitherto referred to have no tithes. They were commuted under the Inclosure Act. I will mention them when I come to them.

850. (*Chairman.*) Has there been outlay here?—Yes, money has been spent freely in the sense of ordinary repairs, but nothing very special.

851. There has been no special outlay?—There has been nothing very special.

852. With that reduction of rent, have you satisfied the tenants?—Up to the present we have, but this, of course, will be a very bad year for them.

Condition of tenants.

853. Of course, it is necessary to treat this last year exceptionally?—Treating that as exceptional I may say that we have. It is all let now. For a few years we had two farms in hand, but these are all let. The condition of one or two of the tenants is extremely unsound, mainly owing to the great loss of sheep in 1882 and 1883.

854. They have hardly got out of the succession of bad seasons from 1878 to 1882?—That is generally the case with tenant farmers.

855. It was due to bad seasons?—And also that since the bad seasons the prices have not improved.

856. But the land has improved?—The quality of the land has come back again quite. There is no trace of the bad seasons so far as the quality of the land is concerned.

Farms in Nottinghamshire.

857. Will you go on with another estate?—The next case will be the parish in which I live myself.

Description.

858. What is the state of affairs there?—Taking the whole of the farming tenants there, I give the particulars of 766 acres, running from 69 acres up to 200 acres.

859. They are mostly small farms?—They are mainly small farms all round, and the result there has been a reduction of 40 per cent.

860. Is that in the same parish that you farm yourself?—That is in the same parish.

861. Does that tally with the other farms?—Four of them are hill farms, farming on clay hills 350 and 300 feet above the sea. It is thin clay when you get on the top of the hills, and particularly on the slopes. On the level we have very nice mould. Then on the steep slopes of the hills it gets thin, and if you get to the top of the hills, where it is flat, we have nice land, but on the ridge it is poor soil, it is poor store ground, strongish clay and thin soil.

862. And these are arable farms? — Two-thirds, I think, would be arable.

863. But they grow wheat?—Yes, wheat. In the old days it would be considered wheat and bean land of very excellent quality.

Reduction of rent.

864. There is a reduction of 40 per cent. there, is there not?—There is a reduction of 40 per cent.

865. Has that been sufficient to keep the tenants?—Yes, it is all let.

866. Where farms have fallen in, have you found it possible to keep the tenants?—As a rule, the old tenants are kept. With regard to the hill farms it is no use letting the tenants go. We have had a sample of that from a neighbouring proprietor in our own county who had hill farmers born and bred there, and no outsider will look at such farms. The effect on the whole district has been very sharply to divide good land from bad, and on the hill land there, away from the village, every inconvenience comes in to people who have not been accustomed to it. It is not only the carriage but the difficulty of getting manure. There is also the difficulty of finding schools for the children, and people now-a-days will not live in isolated places when they can get farms in the valleys. The policy has been to keep the hill men and satisfy them, because if those farms were once open it would be very difficult to persuade an ordinary tenant to take them.

867. You have made large reductions in order to keep the tenants?—Yes.

868. (*Mr. Giffen.*) What is the present average rate per acre in this case?—You may run them from about 12*s.* up to 20*s.*; about that.

869. (*Chairman.*) Do you mean present rents?—Present rents.

Farms on the red clay.

870. Will you go on to the next place, please?—The next case is an estate upon the red clays of Nottinghamshire, which was particularly hit by the bad seasons from 1875 to 1883. The whole estate has something like 3,700 acres, but I give particulars, for accuracy, of seven farms, ranging from 42 acres up to 207 acres.

871. They are not large farms, are they?—No, because those are not let. I am quoting what are let and the rents, but I may say of the largest farm on that property, in hand at the present moment, that there is nothing whatever against it. The house is good and the buildings are good, and the land is better than the average of land, and is within a mile of the station. There are about 520 acres of it, and I cannot find anyone with the requisite capital to take it.

Reduction of rent.

872. And in the case of those farms let, what is the reduction of rent?—46 per cent.

873. What would be their average now?—They would run from 9*s.* 6*d.* up to 34*s.* per acre.

874. It is very difficult to average them, is it not?—It is very difficult to average them.

875. With these reductions have you been able to keep the tenants?—Yes, but their financial condition is not satisfactory; that is to say, there are a large amount of arrears.

System of cultivation.

876. Are these arable farms?—Yes, they are arable farms; two-thirds plough and one-third grass. On the red marls of Nottinghamshire it has been precisely

reversed in the century, but I will come to that in another estate. They are now two-thirds plough and one-third grass, with the exception of a good deal laid down permanently during the last ten years.

Difficulty in letting.

877. You said the large farm of 500 acres is well placed, and yet you cannot find a tenant?—It is well placed, and I cannot find a tenant.

878. It is a difficult thing to find a tenant with capital now, I suppose?—I am quite sure that Nottingham is depleted with people of capital.

Sub-division of farms.

879. Would it be more easy to find tenants if the farm were divided?—Yes, if it could be divided; but it has an excellent house and buildings, and everything laid out for the 500 acres.

880. And it would not be desirable to divide it up?—If it could be made into two farms of course it would be easier to let. In all such cases it is naturally easier to let a small farm than a large one.

Land in hand.

881. How long has that farm been in hand?—10 years or more.

882. Have you farmed it?—Yes, and we are farming it now.

883. What has been your experience of farming it?—Not a very happy one.

884. Have you lost by it?—Yes; we do not get much out of it. You see it is principally a wheat farm and cereals. Although not quite so strong as the rest of the estate, it is not land where you can with advantage put sheep on to turnips.

Farms in the forest land.

885. Will you go on with the next estate?—I will take four farms as representing the forest land of Nottinghamshire, which is light sand. The farms range from 100 acres to 400 acres, and the result has been that we have had to make a reduction of 16 per cent. absolute, and that is the one exception where we continue to make returns each year, varying them according to the circumstances of the case, and very liberal returns, as a rule, are made. I have taken it as typical of the 600 acres.

Reduction of rent.

886. And the reduction is 16 per cent. in that case?—Yes, and each year it is dependent upon the circumstances as to the special return we make.

887. (*Mr. Giffen.*) What is the average rent per acre?—Well, on this forest land it would run from 25*s.* to 32*s.* I have not put the clay part of the estate in, because it is quite on all fours with the other clay lands.

888. (*Chairman.*) What are the temporary abatements on the average?—At least 15 per cent., sometimes more, and never less, I think.

889. When was this reduction of 16 per cent. made?—It would have been made about 1880, and since then we have had returns given every rent audit.

890. Would you mention something about the importance of permanent reductions as compared with abatements. It will be necessary to make them permanently, will it not?—I do not think it will. The actual reductions were made and fixed, and the proprietor has a feeling that he can vary the rent with the seasons, and his treatment of the tenants is good. There has been no change on the part of the tenants, and they are all in a good, sound position and going on well.

Farm on the red clay.

891. Now go on to another estate?—The next is a case on the red clays of Nottinghamshire, in the centre of the county, rather high lying, that is land between 250 and 300 feet above the sea, which is a very considerable factor. The area of the whole estate is 3,000 acres, and I give the particulars of 1,000 acres which happen to be let. I may say that there we have a great deal in hand—a good 1,000 acres in hand at least.

Land in hand.

892. Speaking of the farms which are let, what do you say?—Those are typical of the estate, this 1,000, and the 37 farms run in sizes from 100 acres to 300 acres.

Reduction of rent.

893. And the permanent reduction is what?—50 per cent.

894. (*Mr. Channing.*) Since when?—The reductions have been made at various stages, but probably they run from 1882 or 1883, the bulk of them.

895. (*Chairman.*) And at that reduction have you kept the tenants?—We have kept them, but I cannot say that the condition of land or tenants is anything like satisfactory. It is clay land and runs rather high.

Description.

896. Are they exceptionally bad?—It is not a good estate, the bulk of it. It would be high lying land, and about two thirds of it plough; that is a particular case. I have had shown me the schedule of 100 years ago, and then it was two thirds grass and one third plough, and all in small farms. Now we have got just the reverse, and that is the difficulty; we have two thirds plough and it is a wheat-growing land, and wheat has thoroughly gone down. The late proprietor built houses and buildings and made roads, and did everything that he possibly could in the good times to pull the thing together. The larger farms I have still on hand.

897. Would it be possible to revert to small farms?—Not under a generation at least, because this is an estate on which we have seeded down a great deal of land, feeling that we ought to work back to grass if possible and seed it in every way. The owner has taken a very particular interest in laying it down, I cannot say with success. It will be be all right in a generation, but it is no help to the present tenant or proprietor.

898. It takes a long time I suppose?—It does. I quite admit that in a generation it will come back to very fair store land. I know that because part of the existing park was laid down by my father as a young man at the time, and that is very fair store land, but it will take a good generation to do it.

899. (*Mr. Elton.*) Since when did this period of 100 years begin?—From 1780 to 1880.

Difficulty in letting.

900. (*Chairman.*) How many farms are there?—They would be divided into three farms. It is the same difficulty again with the larger farm; we find a difficulty in getting tenants with the necessary capital, because of the depression. The man who used to farm 400 acres or so, is not strong enough to supply sufficient capital now-a-days.

901. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) May we have the rent?—I could give the rent of all the farms.

Rent.

902. Give us the rent of one farm?—I do not know whether I dare give you one farm, but the lowest is 8*s.* at the present time, and then we run up to 20*s.*

Tithe.

903. (*Chairman.*) How long has the land been in your hands?—I should think since 1879. That year was one of the most miserably wet years that we ever experienced. I might, before passing on to the next estate, refer to the question of tithes. On all those clay-land farms the owner pays the tithe, which has hitherto been paid by the tenants. Since the alteration of the law, by which the proprietor has to pay the tithe, I feel quite sure that we shall have to reduce the rent in proportion to that tithe charge. We shall never get it back from the tenants; you cannot ask for a small sum from the tenant; he simply says, "I shall not pay "it," and we have to pay it.

Another estate in Nottinghamshire.

904. It is a reduction of rent then?—Yes; he says, "I cannot, and do not intend to pay it," and we do not intend to quarrel with a tenant of 200 acres for a small sum. It would be imprudent to do so. The whole of that estate is reduced 50 per cent. The next case is also in Nottinghamshire, and there it is nice loamy land, the bulk of it. There is some moor land lying down below, and the moor part of it is exceptional in the quality of the land, exceptional in the quality of the tenants, and exceptional rather as being near a large town, that is, within four or five miles of a large town. The tenants are perfectly unrestricted, and they can sell what they like, provided they bring back compensation. The permanent reduction there has been 20 per cent.

905. What is the acreage?—The acreage would be about 1,500 acres.

906. How many farms are there?—We have a great many small farms. I have taken out 500 acres as typical of the rest, and they are all small, from 36 acres up to 100 acres, averaging about 70.

907. Is it grass land?—No, the grass land there is good, but it is not a large proportion; it is most beautiful loamy land.

Rent.

908. What is about the rent of that?—All these six farms which I am quoting run from 40*s.* to 55*s.* per acre.

909. (*Mr. Channing.*) Is this market land?—In no sense. A large part of the farms was a portion of the estate of Mr. Paget, who was formerly M.P. for Nottingham, and he cultivated it to the highest extent.

910. (*Chairman.*) Would that reduction of the rents have kept the tenants?—Yes, they are all there. There of them send milk to Nottingham, and they continue

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the old trade. There is no restriction absolutely, and the land is the same as under Mr. Paget. The tenants could sell what they liked so long as they brought the compensation back. The next estate is also in Nottinghamshire; it is half hill-land clay and half forest land, which would be a very good sample of that part of Nottinghamshire as embracing both descriptions of soil. That is about 5,000 acres; but I have typical farms of about 1,300 acres, and the reduction is 42 per cent.

Another estate in Nottinghamshire.

Rents.

911. What is the average rent?—The average rent would be on that estate 12*s.* 6*d.*, that I have got here, and we run up to 20*s.* We have a great many small occupiers of land, but we have had to make a similar reduction to them in many cases. They are not near a market, and are four miles from a station; the land has, therefore, got on fairly well until this year; but still large reductions have had to be made in proportion to the others.

Reduction of rent.

912. With the reductions have you kept the tenants?—Yes, the whole of them, with the exception of one farm, and that is 500 acres, there. I am hoping to let that farm, it used to be in two farms.

913. Are there tithes?—Yes, but we pay them, and always have done so.

914. In such a case as this, do you suppose that the tenants have had the benefit of the reduction in rent in the rates?—Yes; that is why the returns fell through altogether, we had been at a great deal of trouble in Nottinghamshire, with that we began by making a certain reduction on the plough land. We made a special return on the plough land as well as a return on the grass land. That did not answer; then we made a general average per-centage return, and they did not get the rates off; the assessment committee did not admit the temporary reduction, and we put them on a general reduction in order to get a reduction in their rates.

915. The reduction of rent in that case has been 42 per cent. I see?—Yes.

916. This is a purely rural parish, I believe?—Purely rural.

917. Have the rates remained about the same?—They have gone up about 2*d.* in the pound. They have varied very little.

918. And the tenants have had the benefit of the reduction in their rates of the 42 per cent.?—That is so; the very first thing in making a reduction is for the tenant to ask for a letter to the Assessment Committee to certify the reduction.

919. And the landlord had the benefit of the reduction of the tithe?—Yes.

920. You said the landlord paid the tithe in this case?—That is true.

Tithe.

921. Therefore the landlord has had a reduction of 25 per cent.?—There are two tithes—the rectorial and the vicarial—I cannot say.

922. But the general average of the tithe has been reduced nearly 30 per cent.?—Yes, it has. We stand now at 25 per cent. I think it is.

923. 25 per cent under the 100?—Yes.

924. It was above the 100?—It is less than 75.

925. It was about 110?—It got up to 112.

926. And it is now 75?—That is a reduction of 25 per cent.

927. It is not necessary to go into it minutely?—It is 72 to 75 per cent.

928. Whoever pays the tithe has had a considerable reduction?—Yes.

929. (*Mr. Giffen.*) What proportion of the rent would the tithe be?—It varies very much indeed. I have experience of small tithes and very heavy tithes. I know a parish immediately adjoining where I have an agency. I have not mentioned it because it is hill clay land on the forest farm, and there the tithes are something like 5*s.* per acre—very heavy indeed.

930. But that is exceptional, is it not?—It is exceptional for our rural districts; we have tithes up to 6*s.* and 7*s.* nearer to Nottingham.

931. (*Chairman.*) Will you go on to another estate?—That is the whole, and I have given a summary of those estates I have mentioned. I have given the particulars as to portions of the estates mentioned of about an area of 15,000 acres.

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932. Those are given as samples of the whole 40,000 acres?—That is so.

Reductions of rent.

933. We may gather from the facts that you have stated that the extreme reduction has been from 40 to 50 per cent., and that on the very bad clay land, the very stiff clay land?—Yes; 59 per cent. in one case.

934. On good land the reduction has been from 15 to 20 per cent.?—But taking the whole 15,000 acres which I have given you as a sample of the 40,000 or 50,000 acres, the total average deduction has been 33 per cent.

935. You have given a considerable number of illustrations, and the net result has been an average reduction of rent of 33 per cent.?—Yes.

936. With this reduction you have been enabled to keep the tenancies together, have you not?—Yes.

Successful tenants.

937. Have there been many cases in which tenants have done well?—I could mention several cases. I may mention three or four brothers on one farm of each estate, all doing well, and one was even a competitor for the purchase of a small property against a neighbouring proprietor. But he was a very clever, sharp, shrewd man, and a very clever judge of stock. It is difficult to say what are his real farming gains, it is owing to his own shrewdness, I think, that he is doing well.

938. Quite apart from an exceptional case, have there been men who, by applying themselves thoroughly to their own business of farming, have done well?—Certainly, when they are thoroughly skilled and devoting themselves to their business, I know many cases where they are doing well.

939. How do you account for it?—It is a general rule that there are men slightly above the average and there are average men, and those below the average, and there are men of fair strength and intelligence who apply themselves to a special department or some special line of farming that they thoroughly understand, and I know many of these men are doing well and are quite satisfied. I had a conversation with a man closely adjoining me the other day, and I said to him I was coming to this Commission, what is your remedy? and his reply was: "I am doing fairly well; I have nothing much to complain about." That was the case of a man farming two-thirds grass and one-third plough, on a fair quality of land, and he supplies milk to Nottingham.

Dairy-farming.

940. Have they struck out new lines?—In certain cases they have. My experience is this, that where the average farmer sends his butter with the ordinary carrier he charges him 2*d.* a pound for taking the butter to the market, and does not care whether he makes much or little per pound, that man does not make much owing to his want of skill, but I know four or five men who are thoroughly skilled, and their wives devote themselves to the butter making and they take their butter into the town themselves and they get 3*d.* and 4*d.* and 5*d.* above the market price all the year round. I made an observation to a man who has a hill farm two thirds grass, and I said, "I am sorry to say "that the price of butter in the markets has gone "down." He said, "It does not matter in the least to "me," and he showed me eight private customers in the town of Nottingham to whom he took the butter himself, and he never got less than 1*s.* 6*d.* a pound.

941. That is by paying great attention to the quality of the butter?—He and his wife are thoroughly skilled, and they look after it themselves.

942. Has there been any increase in the price of butter?—I do not think so, but there has been a great increase in the supply of milk sent into the towns. I know two farmers who have gone into the milking business who had not previously devoted their attention to it; before this they made butter and cheese. Now, from mere laziness, they are sending the milk into the towns. There has been a great increase in that, and there are great facilities given for it now which there were not years ago, when the last Commission was sitting. About that time they began to give facilities for the transmission of milk to London, and now out of my own parish the milk goes to London all the winter.

943. Even at the present prices you are not without hope that the tenants may do well?—Yes, because you see that at the present prices they have been met so considerably in their rents, and if a man can make the interest on his capital it does not matter whether the rent is 15*s.* or 30*s.*

944. In the reduction of rent and the reduction of rates owing to the lowering of the assessment due to that lowering of rent, have they had considerable advantage?—There are a certain number who are doing fairly well.

945. They have benefited by the lower prices of the articles they have had to buy?—Yes, both for manure and artificial food they have been below the average. The men who were very hardly hit during the bad seasons have never recovered.

Effect of bad seasons.

946. Being hit very badly preceding 1882, I suppose?—Take the Nottinghamshire and hill farms growing mainly wheat, they were hit by the wet, and the Leicestershire people who lost their sheep during the rot were also hit by it.

947. They have never recovered from the effect of the succession of bad seasons?—Quite so.

948. The lower prices may have been made up for by reductions of rent and other reductions that they have had, but still they feel the loss due to the previous years?—I think so; as where I let a certain number of farms I have a greater difficulty in getting the tenant-right paid. I have also a larger per-centage of arrears.

949. Though there have been better seasons since then, there has been a greater fall of prices, and therefore they have not benefited by the better seasons so as to recoup themselves for the loss of previous years?—That is precisely it.

Yearly tenancies.

950. Taking the general average of your tenants, do they hold the tenancies from year to year?—They hold the tenancies from year to year, and, I believe, they all prefer it. I remember when the Agricultural Holdings Act was passed one proprietor said to me, "Let "the tenants have their farms on the year's holding or "subject to six months' notice, but I should like them "to be all alike and let them meet and settle it."

951. The landlords for whom you are agent are prepared to give leases, I suppose?—I do not know that there are tenants to take them.

952. You mean they will not take them?—They are not accustomed to them, neither in Nottinghamshire nor in Lincolnshire.

953. Has it never been the custom to take farms on leases there?—No, I have had to deal with leases, but it has never been the custom in those two counties.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

954. Have you had any complaints under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—No, because it has never taken effect in Lincolnshire or Nottinghamshire; our system of compensation for all things is such that the Act has made very little difference to us.

955. Do they still claim under the custom?—I do not think I have had a single claim under the Act—it is always under the custom.

Reduction of rent.

956. Is it rather more favourable than the Act?—Yes, in certain cases it is. I may say that they are all now under the six months' notice. I do not object to a year if we can get a fair rent, if a man is sound and capable it would make me more safe of having a tenant.

957. Then the landlords have suffered severely by reductions in rent?—There is no doubt about that.

958. Does your memory go back before the rise in rent?—Yes, in 1859 one particular fact I remember well. My father wrote to the tenants of two Leicestershire estates of about 4,000 or 5,000 acres showing that the state of things was so generally favourable for agriculture that it was only fair and equitable that the proprietor should participate in it, and the matter had been considered—I forget the expression—but the idea was that the rent for the future would be on the farm such a price, and I may mention that none of the tenants left, neither was there any difficulty with them, and the change was acceded to. That was in 1859.

959 Do you know from the books of the estate whether the reductions of rent now have gone beyond what they were in 1859?—I could say, but my preparation for this evidence has been so short that I am not prepared to give the statistics.

960. You will supplement your evidence, perhaps?—I could do that with pleasure. *The witness subsequently wrote:—*

"The estate in Leicestershire referred to, and which had the rents raised within my recollection, was raised in 1857, and the increase which then took place was over a part of the property an average increase of 15 per cent. on preceding rents, and over the bulk of the estate an average increase of 10 per cent. The average reductions from these altered rents is 27 per cent., at which it now stands. The estate is about two-thirds grass and one-third plough, fairly situated as to railway and markets. There is therefore a net loss of 12 per cent. over a part, and 17 per cent. over the bulk of the property."

Quality of labour.

961. With regard to the wages of labour, you gave your opinion as to the greater inefficiency of labour in your parish?—I think that the general result in Nottinghamshire with reference to labour is that it is not so efficient as it was. The generation who were skilled men have died out, leaving a certain number of labourers; the young men who would have taken their places have gone into the towns, to the police stations, or to the railway station, and to other employments. Certainly the quality of labour in my opinion in my neighbourhood is not so good as it used to be, quite apart from the price paid per week, they are not so skilled, and it will be worse in the future. I have myself been instrumental in sending 10 or 15 young men into situations in towns.

Rural depopulation.

962. Do you hear that that is a general complaint?—That is so, and the quality of labour as a rule, though it affects us more than purely rural districts where they have not the same temptations to go into the towns, has also depreciated.

963. It is, I suppose, largely a question of wages?—It is not only wages. I do not think that equal or even superior wages would stop the tendency to go into the towns.

964. On account of the attractions of the town, I suppose?—The attractions of the town and the greater amount of incident and life that they see will always tell in favour of the town. I know that, because of each young fellow who wants to go into the towns I ask the reason, and I have ascertained as far as I could what was the object of the emigration.

Reduced employment.

965. Taking the farms that you mentioned, is there a reduced employment of labour?—Certainly, and the result of the extreme wet seasons is to turn down plough land to grass, and that in itself has caused a gradually decreased demand for labour. The 400 acres that we gave up in 1878 and 1879 we had previously farmed for 30 years; the condition of that is that one-half which was plough is now grass, and there are now only one man and a lad, and we formerly had six or eight labourers during the winter.

966. What is the reduction in that respect with regard to labour?—As to the prices per week?

967. As to the number of labourers employed?—I could accurately give it for my parish in which I live, and, to a certain extent, I could with the estates with which I have to deal.

968. You can, perhaps, supplement that part of your evidence?—I shall be glad to do so. *The following statement was subsequently received:—*

"As to the reduction in the labourers employed on land, I have a case of a farm of 416 acres, of which three-quarters would be plough land, and which forms a very fair sample of a useful Notts farm on the Kemper division of the New Red Sandstone. There is good grass well watered in the valley, and the plough land part clay on the hill slopes, and partly table land about 200 to 250 feet above sea level. This was farmed, and farmed profitably to 1878.

"As the result of the depression about 150 acres have been seeded down to grass, two freehold purchasers are not very successfully trying some market gardening on 50 acres; 30 acres are running waste, and the grass land is occupied. Making a careful calculation of the money that would represent the labour of those employed now, and the regular staff of labourers formerly employed, it would not amount to more than half the amount at the present time compared with the past. The labour now, too, is done by the people who occupy the land, and no regular labourer working for wages is employed, excepting occasionally.

"The amount paid in wages used to be 500*l.* per annum and upwards, and now 150 acres is grassed down, this land being formerly all plough would account at least for 250*l.* a year which represents in itself an equivalent of five men throughout the year at 1*l.* per week thrown out of employment, and the grass which replaces it would not represent the equivalent of one man."

Expenditure on improvements.

969. (*Lord Cobham.*) You do not appear to have made any very large outlay in permanent improvements?—I may say that the reason of that is that a great many

estates were held by improving landlords during the good times, and the amount that they expended would certainly astonish the public. With regard to four or five, the amount of money expended in permanent improvements during the good times when the rents were good, which expenditure has saved me the outlay in the bad times, is something very great. That is the reason I have not had so much to expend during my period.

970. Do you think more would have been expended if facilities for finding the money had been afforded, in the way of Government advances, for instance?—Yes, I think, perhaps, there would have been—in case of drainage, no doubt—but I may say, generally, that the amount expended during 20 years preceding the depression on some estates would stagger the public—the amount in roads and buildings, and making everything good—that, for the period ever since my father died, and a period five or six years previously, it left nothing but ordinary repairs, because the expenditure had been so great in previous years, otherwise it would have been terrible.

Sale by dead-weight.

971. I gather that you do not sell the meat on your farm by dead weight?—Not now.

972. Do you think it beneficial?—Yes, anything that would let people know accurately what they were doing, is good. I have sold by auction of late, owing to the pressure of times not allowing me more time to sell my own; but previously to that I always sold by weight or by measure.

973. The farmers do not like it, do they?—I think that they are wrong. I do not think that there is anything gained by not doing it. I am sure when they put the judgment of a butcher, who is constantly in the market, against the judgment of a farmer who is only occasionally at the market, the butcher will always get the best of it. I always strongly advocate the weighing of sheep and measuring of beasts.

General condition of estates under his management.

974. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You told us you attributed the great improvement both on the grass land and arable land to the better climate of the last five or six years?—That is so.

975. You have given us evidence of estates, I may say of rather a small circle, in Lincolnshire and Leicestershire, and Nottinghamshire and Huntingdonshire?—Yes.

976. From your experience does that improvement extend further south?—I should not like, and would not speak as a man of business, of anything further south than Huntingdonshire.

977. You speak only of those estates in those counties?—Yes, those Midland counties with which I am best familiar. I have no experience south of Huntingdon.

978. You have no case of late years of land being so badly cultivated that it has really tumbled down into grass?—Yes, there is plenty of that land in the Midlands; it twitches itself down, as we call it.

979. Have you to treat with any such land?—Yes; that farm which now is let at 8*s.*, a bill farm in the centre of Nottingham, a portion of that has twitched itself down.

980. Could you get an enterprising tenant to put it into condition?—I have made an arrangement with a person to take up a couple of fields a year. There are so many farms falling in hand that I cannot and I will not deal with many more, and that must take its chance.

981. It is not only the loss from the reduction of rent, but there is expenditure in other ways, in keeping the land in the best cultivation?—Certainly.

Cost of labour.

982. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) You spoke about the increase in the expense of labour during the last few years, how much per acre would that be?—I could tell you that when I supplement my evidence afterwards. I went to the year 1880, and back for 20 years previously, when the wages of the labourer were 10*s.* per week—that is the ordinary agricultural labourer's wage. When I found it was 16*s.* 6*d.* I expected an enormous increase in the price per acre, and I was staggered when I found we were paying very little more per acre than we did previously. The only explanation of that is that we are using so many labour-saving machines and implements; but that so astonished me at the time that I wrote to the most intelligent tenants to ask them if their experience corresponded with mine, because it was so contrary to our expectations.

983. So that the expense of labour had not increased materially?—It had not at that time. Wages have gone down since that time, when they were from 15*s.* 6*d.* to 16*s.* per week.

984. If that is held as a cause of depression it is not an accurate statement?—No, I do not think so. I was very much staggered by it, but I do not think that it is. I think that the extra price per week for labour was saved by the use of labour-saving machines, and that is the only explanation; the fact was undoubted.

Rates.

985. You spoke of the Assessment Committee as not being bound to reduce the rate owing to the reduced rentals?—Whenever we reduce the rent we get a letter from the tenant saying will you give us a letter to show the Assessment Committee?

Tithe.

986. The tithe was deducted?—The tithe differs from that. The proprietor has sometimes paid, and in other cases the tenant has paid. Now of late, the proprietor pays the whole, and in such cases where the tenant had to pay it would practically amount to a reduction of the rent, for we could not get it back. The tithe is assessed in the Union in which I live in this way. It is first of all deducted from the farm on which it is charged, and it is charged in the bulk to the vicar.

987. The tenant gets the benefit of the reduction of the tithe?—Where he pays he gets the difference between the 100 and 72 per cent.

Rates.

988. In the case of the assessment being made equivalent to the reduction of the rent as the rate increased?—I take it in this way, supposing the expense of the Union ran on the same where the allowance is made to the agricultural tenant, the rating must be proportionately higher on some property in the Union—no doubt it must.

989. Is not the tenant in the same position as regards rate paying after having received the reduction in his assessment? He has to pay an increased rating, I take it, so that he gets no benefit from the reduction of the assessment?—As you put it that would be so, but it also is increased on other properties, house and tithe throughout the Union as well.

990. I was thinking of the rural tenant where the conditions would be the same?—Take the Union where our rates have not been increased, or take the case that I have just mentioned about 2*d.* increase on the land.

991. Is that in reduction of assessment?—That is so?

Value of wool.

992. You spoke of the decrease in the value of wool. When was that decrease?—I could give it to you in periods. It is a very serious item really. I am now taking not the general average with the country, but a special farm which we occupied, and I may say that the sheep were Leicesters crossed with Lincolns, and latterly with Hampshire downs. The prices from 1850 to 1860 were averaged at 33*s.* 10*d.* per tod; from 1860 to 1870 the average was 51*s.*, that would include the American War prices; from 1870 to 1879 the average was 45*s.*; and from 1880 to 1891 it was 24*s.* I could supplement those by the prices for each year. All those are averages.

Reduction of rates.

993. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Would the reduction in that sum you hand over to the owner of property for which you are agent correspond with the reductions in the rentals you have given us?—No, because there has been an increase of expenditure as well.

994. So that as far as the owner is concerned the reduction of the rental which you have given us is less in proportion than the reduction in his net income?—Yes, certainly, and would have been much more if I had not succeeded to improving landlords in the past, who had spent a great deal of money upon the estates.

Restrictions in selling.

995. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) You were speaking of giving a free hand and selling everything on the farm?—I was speaking especially of this estate, which is close to a large town where facilities are given to them for bringing back manure. It would be imprudent to prevent it. They have a perfectly free hand, the only condition being that they shall bring back manure as an equivalent.

996. And what basis do you lay down for obtaining that equivalent?—It would amount to about 1*l.* or 30*s.* per acre. It was laid down by the late Mr. Paget.

997. The value of what they take off they must bring back in manure?—Yes, in manure.

Shooting rights.

998. Are the shootings on this estate let, or are they in the hands of the proprietors?—In all cases but one they are in the hands of the proprietors.

Cause of depression.

999. (*Mr. Long.*) May we take it, as the general result of the evidence you have given, that your experience

is that the real cause of agricultural depression has been the fall in prices?—Yes; the net result of the whole thing is that up to 1880 it was seasons, and since 1880 my idea is that it is prices, and prices alone.

1000. Have you found that alterations in your system of letting, or variations in the size of your farms—that circumstances like these have either increased or decreased the pressure of the times?—I may say, of course, we have tried in every way in which we could to meet the times; that is to say, by dividing the farms where it is feasible, and particularly being lenient with the tenants in arrear, and by, in certain cases, allowing the tenant right, or a portion of it, under stipulations to stand over.

Sub-division of farms.

1001. Would you mind explaining that phrase, "Where it is feasible." I am anxious that what you mean when you say that you have divided farms where it has been feasible should appear on the notes?—I mean this, that in many cases there were farms existing in the old days that had been converted from two or three farms and thrown together. In these cases there were three centres, and it would be easy to separate those farms again by expenditure. Of course it would cost a great deal of money, but still it is feasible. Where you have a farm of 500 acres which has been laid out with fields and roads and good buildings, it is hardly practicable in the present financial condition of land to admit of separating those up.

1002. How long do you estimate that it would take a property to recover the outlay necessary in order to break it up into small farms, say making a good-sized farm into two?—The difficulty would be this: what are you to do with a large house and the large buildings already in the centre? They would be wasted and thrown away if they were attached to 250 or 300 acres.

1003. Does the difficulty begin and end with the big house and big buildings? Is there no difficulty with regard to the distribution of the land?—Yes, there would be, because each farm has a certain proportion of grass and plough, and it may happen that the grass is all round the large house and the large buildings. There may be great difficulties there.

1004. Would I be misinterpreting what you say if I were to put it to you that you would have no difficulty in turning a large farm into three farms, so far as two-thirds of it was concerned, but that you would have some difficulty in disposing of the remnant, the worse, or more distant land?—It would hardly be that. Take the 500 acres where there is no house and building, there would be no difficulty in putting it into three farms, and we should then form three homesteads.

1005. You are thinking of one particular case. I want your general experience. You are now applying the experience of one particular farm generally to the whole of that property, but I want you to do exactly the reverse?—I was simply referring to that as one typical instance which gives the idea.

1006. But I am afraid I do not make it clear? Take such a case as this: It may be possible to divide a farm into three. You might find three farmers to take the three, where there would not be the difficulty of great expense on buildings. Would such a farm, having regard to the distribution of land, get tenants?—If you have a farm with 600 acres divided, I think I could let it more easily.

1007. Could you let 600 acres more easily by putting them into farms of 200 acres, putting aside the expenditure?—Yes, certainly.

1008. It is only with regard to the distribution of land from a farming point of view?—We could not do that.

1009. The difficulty does not consist alone in the capital expenditure for the buildings?—It is a very large factor, but it is not the only difficulty.

1010. There is a practical one?—That is so—the distribution of the land.

Rates.

1011. With reference to the assessment question, you told us that there had been considerable pressure on the part of certain occupiers to have the temporary reductions turned into permanent reductions in order to get a reduction in the rates?—That was so, in Nottinghamshire especially. We began very early to make returns, The returns varied, and that went on for a year or two, and then the difficulty arose that the Assessment Committee would not recognise those returns as reductions, and charged the farm upon the full rent, and the tenant came and said, "I must ask "you to make it a permanent reduction, so as to get "my relief from the Assessment Committee. You do "not get the money." It seems so natural that as he did not get relief from the old returns, we should ease the tenant in that respect by making it a permanent reduction.

1012. That leads to the conclusion that those rents should be reduced in order that the tenants should get the additional benefit of the rate, but ought it not to lead to a different conclusion, namely, that the system is not a fitting and proper one, and is it not an unfair thing that this should be an indirect relief of the proprietors at the expense of the other ratepayers in the district?—Yes; to a certain extent.

1013. In your opinion is the rent the proper basis on which the Assessment Committee should go in fixing the assessment of the farm? Does the rent always represent the value in the market?—No, it does not; I may say, that in the Union I lived in in the past 30 years, that has been the case, and in other Unions in the county, and it is so now.

1014. What is the basis of rent?—The Schedule A of the Income Tax and the gross rental of the Rate Book, are now the same thing; that represents the rent as a rule over a very large area, over all our areas. It is not quite fair, but it is perhaps the best they can get.

1015. Is it a fair system of arriving at the rateable value of land?—It is the safest practically, because an owner gets as much as he can.

1016. Does it take into consideration the different circumstances which govern certain lettings?—It does not.

1017. It does not represent the market value?—It is not quite equity, but you must have a choice of evils, and if you have not the rent, it is somebody's opinion. That opinion may be right or wrong, and may give satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

1018. Are you familiar with the practice which exists in Scotland with reference to assessments?—No, I am not.

1019. You are aware that it is proposed that a Government official should be introduced into the local assessment in order to produce uniformity; would you have anything to say to a suggestion of that kind?—I think of the two evils, probably taking the rents would be the least.

1020. You are rather afraid of the Government official?—I am very much afraid of the multiplication of our officials all over the country.

1021. That fear is generally shared in the agricultural districts, is it not?—There is a great deal of fear of the multiplication of the number of inspectors and officials.

1022. Does that proceed from the belief that it is exceptionally hard to get the general public to understand agricultural questions and agricultural problems?—We are generally told that we do not understand agricultural affairs or our own business.

1023. Is it not a grievance that you have got too many teachers?—With the best intentions, that is so, no doubt, very decidedly.

1024. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Do you find that the rate in the pound of the rural rate varies very much in the different unions?—Yes.

1025. To what extent does the variation take place?—It would vary in the different parishes in the same Union in this sense; take our own, which is too favourable a sample, but still take it, it is 1*s*. 10*d*. in the pound. That would be the general charge in the Union. But there are certain parishes which have certain sanitary rates. We have 20*l*. for extra police protection, and 15*l*. for sanitary purposes, and the neighbouring Union would pay the police rate, but not the sanitary one. It varies very much between different Unions.

1026. Do you consider that 1*s*. 10*d*. is the minimum rate in the parishes you know?—I think it is.

1027. What would be the maximum?—That would be difficult to say.

1028. Do you take the rates at all into account when you fix the rent?—Certainly.

1029. Cannot you say what the maximum is in any parish that you know of those properties?—Yes; I know cases of 4*s*. and 5*s*.

1030. That is a case where there would be a school board?—There would be a school board. In the union

I first was speaking of we have no school board, and no special sanitary rates. That would be in an urban district.

1031. When you have got agricultural land in an urban district?—If I may explain myself, take this to be a stream (*pointing*); I live on this side, the eastern side, which is a purely rural union. On that side, with quite as much country, it happens to be next to a district which is urban, and there the rates are very much heavier.

1032. If you are in an urban district, where the rates are 4*s.* or 5*s.* the agricultural land does not pay the whole of that, it is rated at one-fourth to the sanitary rates?—That is so.

1033. What, practically, does the agricultural land pay?—It pays one-fourth.

1034. What does the rate in the pound come to; taking that into account you take it as 4*s.* or 5*s.*?—I must think of the worst case. It would in Nottinghamshire; I think it would be 3*s.* or 3*s.* 3*d.*

1035. After making that allowance?—Yes, after making that allowance.

1036. How do you account for the fact that the rate in the pound has not gone up more in your parish although the assessment has gone down, I understand, 40 per cent.; is it the Government subventions that have helped you?—That is asking a question that I have not given time to consider, and, in fact, I can only speak to the two facts. I see the point—that is so.

1037. You know that the rate in the £ has only gone up 2*d.*?—In the particular parish 40 per cent. on the agricultural land, and taking the houses, &c. 18 per cent. grass land and low land.

1038. Therefore, it is either from Government subventions or something else?—I do not know of any other thing than Government subventions; the expenses are not less.

1039. The poor rates are not less?—The poor rates are not less. We seem to spend a great deal of money, but the poor do not get it.

1040. And the Government subventions have assisted you?—They have assisted us; they must have done, because of these two facts.

1041. You always take the rates into account in the rent?—Yes; that is raised by anyone who takes the farm.

Condition of the farmer since 1882.

1042. You think that not much capital has been lost, speaking as a whole, by the farmer since the bad seasons?—Yes, he has lost a considerable amount of capital since the bad seasons began. His position has been very much weakened on the whole.

1043. I thought it was your idea that the good seasons had not recovered him sufficiently?—Do you mean that he had lost capital since the date of the last Commission?

1044. Yes?—That would depend upon the sort of farming. Take the case of the wheat farmer. He suffered during the wet seasons; and take the case of the Leicestershire farmers, they suffered with the sheep rot; then take the case of the Lincolnshire farmers, they suffered from the fall in the price of wool.

1045. How long ago is that?—It is practically since the last Commission, that has gone from 45*s.*, on the average, to 24*s.*

Rates.

1046. (*Mr. Lambert.*) In your own parish has there been any increase in the rateable value, are there any towns in the union?—None whatever; no town whatever; the centre of the union is a cathedral city, but it has only 2,000 or 3,000 people, and there is no large town in the centre.

1047. Has the rateable value of that town increased?—I should say not. Our own, I may say, has got down from 4,000 to 3,000 roughly.

1048. Why do not you think that the rent would not represent the value for assessment purposes?—I think I stated that that was the readiest and best way. There is always a choice of evils, but perhaps taking the rent is the safest way, and gives rise to less dissatisfaction.

1049. Do you expect to increase the rates in the near future?—I do.

1050. What would it be expended on?—I take it in this way; the Public Health Act of 1875 is in our union not a dead letter, because we have many notices under it, but there are no great sanitary schemes as to the village sewage and water supply; and that is upon us in the near future.

1051. When these works are carried out it would improve the property?—It will improve the village property, but it will do nothing for farm lands. That is a point that we have a difficulty about in my own parish at the present moment. The village sewer was discharged in a small cesspool close to the road. That was condemned between 1885 and 1893, and there is a scheme now of sewerage to remedy that. But there is a great divergence of opinion. It will improve the villages, but all the farmers will gain will be that they will have to pay their contributions and they will get nothing out of it.

1052. But would it not improve the rateable value of these cottages?—As those cottages are mainly occupied by farm labourers it would not benefit the farmer.

1053. Do you think it is fair that the tenant should have to pay an increased rate after he has taken his farm?—If that rate troubles him very much we should soon hear of it. I have a case where a man comes this year and says, "I was perfectly satisfied up to last year, "but my rates have been very much increased, I must "have a reduction of the rent in proportion." I am engaged in satisfying myself that it is the proper reduction.

1054. Supposing there is an increase of 2*l.* or 3*l.* per year, you would not hear of that so quickly?—No.

1055. The tenant would go on paying?—Yes.

Fall in prices.

1056. Could you tell me the per-centage of decrease on all farm produce?—Well, the tithe measures all cereals exactly, because the tithe is divided into three parts, wheat, barley, and oats, and it is, as you know, measured by the seven years preceding, so that that measures cereals exactly.

1057. Could you give me a rough estimate of the amount that agricultural produce has decreased?—From what period?

1058. Since 1882, I should think?—Well, it has gone very near. I have not prepared myself for that. I had proposed doing so by a chart, but I have not had time. I am speaking quite off hand, but I think it would be from 25 to 30 per cent., that would be the minimum because cereals have gone down 25 per cent., and wool has gone down nearly 50 per cent. within the last 10 years, and beef has gone down certainly 20 per cent. It was selling at 10*s.* and 9*s.* 6*d.*, and now it is 8*s.* per stone. I think 30 per cent. is a rough shot. *The witness subsequently further supplemented his answer as follows:—*

"The rough estimate of the amount that agricultural produce has depreciated would not be the average depreciation of the several products, but would vary according to the main products of each farm. For the farm above referred to, and taking an average of its production for a series of years, and deducting from each kind as fair a depreciation as my experience gives, I find on the whole it is at least a depreciation of 30 per cent. on its receipts."

1059. As to the loss of capital which do you estimate is the greater in proportion to the capital, the farmers' loss or the landlords'?—That is a very difficult question to answer. The result of the 15 years' depression in seasons and prices together has been certainly to shove on to the landlord the bulk of the losses now, and so far as income is concerned——

1060. But hitherto the farmer has borne the loss?—He would suffer by the destruction of part of his capital.

1061. Do you think that the farmers have lost an appreciable amount of their capital?—I believe so.

1062. You could not give an estimate?—No, but certainly they have.

Large and small farms compared.

1063. Which are most prosperous—the large or the small occupiers of land?—I have given that subject a very great deal of consideration, and I read a paper before the Surveyors' Institution about it. There is no district or size of farms which one could say would be more prosperous than others; in certain cases large farms prosper, and in others small ones. I am not in the least degree against small farms—on the contrary.

Expenditure on improvements.

1064. You spoke of the cost under the Settled Estates Act just now, does the very fact of having to apply for money to carry out permanent improvements interpose any obstacle in the way of carrying out those improvements?—I should like to correct my reply of this morning to this extent: the case of going to the courts I think is a peculiar case, and

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not common or usual in this sense. I have applied not only for prospective expenditure which I am going to make, but a certain amount which I have spent for the life tenant, and that the trustees should bear it. I think that they are going to the court on the past expenditure. Where the proposal is made previous to commencing work, and we act under the Board of Agriculture the life tenant makes an application to the trustees. They go to the Board of Agriculture to appoint a surveyor.

1065. It does not make any obstacle then?—No, I do not think it does. In the case I have mentioned it is a question of past expenditure.

1066. You said there were a good many farmers in arrears?—That is so.

1067. Are they good farmers?—The worse the farmer is the more he gets into difficulties.

Rents in arrear.

1068. Are there some good farmers?—As a rule the good farmers are not in arrear.

1069. Do those men in arrear pay sufficient rent?—In several cases I do believe that we have made reductions very handsomely, but, as a rule, we have hit the mark as well as we can.

1070. Do you think that it is owing to a man having unthrifty and unbusiness-like habits?—I think it is in a great measure.

1071. In some cases it is not so?—In some cases it is not so; but it is that combined with less amount of capital than he ought to have had when he came to the farm, and it is quite impossible for him if he does that to pay his way. The best class of farmers are not the people who are in arrears.

Large and small farms compared.

1072. You were speaking just now of the letting of small farms and large farms, which are the easier to let?—It depends upon the neighbourhood and description of farm, but near to a town I should easily let a small farm.

1073. Because there would be greater facilities in the disposal of farm produce, I suppose?—Yes.

Dairy factory.

1074. There have been great improvements effected in that respect of late, have there not?—I think there have. We are engaged now in endeavouring to get a dairy factory in the village where I live, in order to get the butter to a more even quality, and to assist the farmers in this way.

Railway rates.

1075. Do you think that the railway rates have handicapped farmers?—Yes, I do. I have no very special experience about them, and they are very fair with their milk rates to London, and the higher rates at the beginning of the year have been taken off again. But there have been one or two cases I could mention. One was the case of a farmer on the wolds of Lincolnshire, who finding that mutton was making a fair price in the London market, he wished to send his sheep. His natural station was Louth, but he found it more prudent to send them from Louth to Grimsby to get the preferential rate, so that he was sending them 20 miles further quite unnecessarily.

1076. So that there is a very great difference between through rates from Grimsby as compared with Louth?—Clearly from that. I know another case of corn coming from Liverpool to Nottingham, and I think that because it was not according to sample or some cause or other, it was sent back. But it was charged considerably more for going back than coming from Liverpool to Nottingham. In the one case it was English corn going to Liverpool, and in the other it was supposed to be foreign corn coming to Nottingham.

1077. And there is an undue preference given to the foreign corn in that respect?—Yes. If we were equidistant from some centre that we should like to supply, it would perhaps come in cheaper from the foreign market than the English corn would go the same distance.

Shooting rights.

1078. Does the landlord keep the shooting in all cases?—In all cases but one.

1079. Now about the ground game—hares and rabbits?—I cannot say that I have had any special difficulty about that.

Ground game.

1080. Have the tenants the right of killing ground game as they please?—They do when they feel themselves hurt. As a rule I ask them to forego the right, and see that they are not injured. The killing of rabbits is about the worst habit a man can have. If his son is always hanging about the farm with a gun, he will do no good to the farm.

1081. That is true. Do you think that you suffer from any excess of rabbits?—Not much.

1082. Do you know of any case?—Where it is so, it is almost inevitably between two large woods, for instance; do as you will, there will be always more there than there will be on a farm which is further off. I cannot say that I have any difficulty.

1083. Do you think there would be any inducement for a tenant to take a farm if he had the whole of the shooting rights?—Over a certain per-centage of farms it might be so. I do not think that over the bulk of the farms it would be so at all.

Restriction in selling.

1084. What is your system of tenure; have you any restrictions?—Yes, we have as a rule. They do not sell off in all cases except where they are near a large town; but if circumstances do arise they do it, and unless they do it unfairly and it is continued too long, we do not interfere.

1085. You allow freedom of cultivation, then?—Within reasonable limits.

1086. As long as they do not impoverish the farm, I suppose?—Yes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

1087. Have you any cases under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I do not think so.

1088. Do you consider that your farmers get more compensation under custom than under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes, we think that the Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire custom is better than the Agricultural Holdings Act. It is quite expansive, and it has gradually grown.

1089. Do you believe that where landlords have carried out a large amount of improvements prior to 1880 there would have been such a large amount of expenditure now?—Certainly not, and that is the reason I have got off so easily.

Expenditure on improvements.

1090. Those landlords who have carried out a large amount of improvements since 1880 would, I presume, have neglected their estates previous to that time?—I do not know of more than two cases. In the good days, the farmers being well-to-do and men of capital, would often say, "I want a pair of cottages; I will give so much if you will do the remainder." When the bad times came they said: "We cannot afford to do "anything of that sort, and we must have the cottages "built entirely, and as things go we shall not do the "leading, and you must arrange for it to be lead for "us."

Land in hand.

1091. (*Mr. Channing.*) You farm 250 acres, I believe?—Yes, but up to 1881 we farmed 800 acres.

1092. You said that you have made in these times, including last year, a rent of some kind or another?—Not very high.

1093. I understand that you do not put in your own account?—No, I do not. I am quite willing to supplement my evidence by anything the Commission would like to have.

1094. The question I wanted to ask is this: In making an estimate of your profit what allowance have you made for these rents on your own land some years ago and what allowance you are making now?—I shall be glad to supplement that with any information that I can get.

1095. You could not answer that particular question now?—Certainly not every year, that is to say, a fair rent.

1096. Do you attribute your getting along tolerably well to having your own land very well fitted with improvements, or to your way of cultivating?—I put it in this way: we got rid of the large arable farm in 1878, and what remained then was the valley land, that is very good grass and very useful plough, so that we had the kernel of the nut left when the plough farm was given up in 1878.

1097. My question is pretty much this: have you made up your account at a fair rent, supposing you were to let so as to enable a farmer to live?—I let it last Lady Day. I will supplement that part of my evidence.

Condition of agriculture.

1098. You spoke of the condition of the land in these various estates, and I suppose generally they have come back to a fair condition throughout?—I think so, so far as quality is concerned, both the grass and the plough.

1099. Do you attribute it altogether to the good seasons?—To the good seasons. I would qualify that in this way; Nature has done everything that it can. I do not say that taking the country all round it is in the same state of fertility, and that there is the same expenditure of manures as there was.

1100. Has there not been an immense variety of treatment by the farmers holding under you?—Certainly, every farm varies, and generally they have entirely recovered from the effect of the wet seasons, both plough land and grass land.

1101. It is no longer water-logged, I suppose?—No, it is not; and the grasses have come back again to the old quality.

Reductions of rent.

1102. You spoke of those reductions which are very various all through the estates. The rents were also various, I suppose, as regards their proportion to the productive value of the land? In some of those estates the rents were very full rack-rented and others comparatively low?—I should not put it in that way. I do not think there is any case of that sort.

1103. Do you think throughout that the rents in which these reductions were made were what you might call fair average rents?—I think they are very fair average rents, for they had run for years unaltered and uncomplained of. They varied, of course, according to the value of the land and the circumstances.

1104. Where have the greatest reductions been made; is it in the land found to be in the worst condition?—The greatest reductions have been made where they suffered most on the hill clay lands.

1105. Land which would command least in the market?—That is so.

1106. Farms which have been well looked after by their tenants, and where a man has spent more than the average in fertilisers and in labour, and in various small improvements of his own, they would command a higher price than the neighbouring land?—No, we have had a very curious experience in the wet seasons. Those who have spent more in fertilisers have not come off so well as those who have not. I am sorry to say that in our own parish, comparing two fields, from one with a good loam and well cultivated for 20 years, during one year we had less return than on a hill clay farm, which had sold everything off in the 20 years previously, the inferior field there had a steep slope where the water got off, and the other one which lay low got water-logged; and where it was manured and artificially manured we had a less return than we had on the hill farm.

1107. In making reductions you have not taken into consideration the outlay of the tenants in improving the farm or keeping up its fertility?—I am sorry to say that they have not been in a position to make improvements, nor do we wish them to do so. I think that permanent improvement, everything belonging to the fabric, is the landlord's duty, and it is his business, and it has always been accepted so with us.

1108. You said that some of this land was five-quarter land, that is land well looked after by the tenant. I suppose?—That is so; that is my own I was referring to.

1109. With regard to those five Lincolnshire farms on the wolds with 2,700 acres, I notice that the reduction in rent came as late as 1887?—That was so.

1110. Those men would, therefore, be paying rent for several years out of their own capital?—No. We made temporary returns, and they were more hard hit by the drop in wool; they had not suffered from the wet seasons as the lower lands of Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire have done. They came upon us when they began to feel the pinch.

Scarcity of labourers.

1111. (*Mr. Thomas.*) Is there any scarcity of farm labour?—There is beginning to be felt a scarcity.

Unculti-vated land.

1112. Is there any land out of cultivation?—No, I do not think there is.

Quality of cultivation.

1113. Are the farms, in your opinion, sufficiently cultivated now?—I think, taking the average, no doubt they could be very much improved in cultivation; but, of course, I may say now, after such a year as this, that for the estates with which I have to deal, it has been a beautiful fallowing year, and the land is clean—they vary—some are as clean as a garden, and some not so good; but on the whole the cultivation has certainly improved, and naturally so from the more favourable seasons for cleaning.

1114. Comparing things with 20 years ago, is the fertility of the land now equal to what it was then?—Where it is properly farmed; I had a proof of it, in a certain sense, in 1887; we did make just the same amount of wheat as in 1868, which was also a favourable year for wheat.

Changes in cultivation.

1115. Has there been any change in your district in the mode of cultivation with respect to grass or wheat?—There has been a certain quantity of plough land laid down to grass, perhaps, over a largish area, and also a greater development in the supply of milk to towns with the greater facilities given, and that is increasing very much.

1116. At whose expense has the land been laid down in grass, the landlords or the tenants?—Always by the landlord. We have taken it in hand, and laid it down in fallow for a certain time, and found the seeds for it. We have practically laid it down ourselves, and in certain cases, where any hardship has been suffered, an allowance has been made to the tenant for the loss which would take place in putting down the plough land to grass.

Fall in prices.

1117. (*Mr. Everett.*) Should you say that the farmers were doing better for themselves in the times before the rents went down; that is to say, when rents were high and were tending upwards than they are doing at the present time?—I think at all times when prices are rising everybody does better; that is to say, their financial condition was sounder in 1874 a great deal than it is now.

1118. They could make a little money and pay a high rent better than with the low rents?—Yes; in all respects their condition was better then than it is now.

1119. Taking the whole county and all classes in it, do you look upon this falling in prices as a calamity or as a blessing?—As a great calamity.

1120. What do you think will happen to the land if the fall in price still goes on?—I am hoping that we are touching the bottom. We are open to the competition of the whole world, but I hope we shall pull through.

1121. But if it does go on what is the probable future?—I am afraid I must not prophesy on circumstances that are hypothetical.

1122. Have you any idea of what has caused this fall in price?—I have a theory; we all have theories.

1123. What is yours?—There is a general feeling, and a growing feeling too, amongst agriculturists that it is the depreciation in common with trade and everything else that prices are going down in western Europe.

1124. And that is due to what?—I do not speak specially on such subjects, but the feeling is that it is due to the financial changes in Europe in the last 15 or 20 years.

1125. To the alteration in the value of money?—Yes.

Dairy-farming.

1126. (*Mr. Elton.*) When you were speaking about the dairy farming in the Midlands, I understood you to say that the farmers do the dairy work themselves; therefore, I presume you have not got the system by which they sub-let to a dairy man and his wife?—No, we have not. In those cases where I said they were successful, both the farmer and his wife do the dairy work themselves. I do not think there is any case of sub-letting. We are trying to establish dairy factories now.

Rural depopulation.

1127. When you spoke about the young men going to the towns and about their reasons for going I did not gather whether you meant to include those who went to the collieries in your neighbourhood?—The class that go away from us consists of two sorts—first of all the most intelligent young fellows who do not care to take to agricultural work, get better places and prefer a town life, those who are near the collieries who are born in the district very often become banksmen, but they are the ne'er-do-wells. The best men do not go to the collieries, but those who do drift on to a colliery bank and become banksmen.

1128. Do you find that they come back again?—They tend to come back again, and they are no use to us.

Sub-division of farms.

1129. That was what I expected you to say. Now about the breaking up of farms; you explained the subject to Mr. Long. What I want to ask is this: Where farms have been consolidated out of small farms the special difficulty would not arise that you mention?—That is so, because the cottages and farm buildings remain.

1130. And there is the nucleus of distribution?—That is precisely so.

1131. So that you could part it up again?—That is so.

1132. Of course, in small places sometimes you find that the homestead could be divided for two small farms?—Yes.

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1133. That is back to back?—We have absolutely done that—dividing the same homestead between two farmers.

1134. I am only speaking, of course, of practical instances in my own knowledge?—That is so; I have done that.

1135. I gathered that the falling is, in average cases, where farmers are touched by depression; in the main bulk of the cases the depression has been met by a falling in the rent?—That is so.

1136. And the farmers have not felt it so much, having that to fall back upon?—They have not.

Result of the depression.

1137. And I gather this, and I am going to ask you this point: but, of course, as one would expect the depression has caused a tendency for the margin of cultivation to recede, especially in the case of the hill farms—poor hill farms—because I think you told me, did you not, that the hill farms must take more care, because, if you let a hill farmer leave his land you will not get a successor?—That is a difficulty.

1138. Notwithstanding that the farmers as a class had been much helped by the reduction in rent; the lowest class of farm land has the tendency to go out of cultivation, or rather, I would say, to lie vacant?—We have not a case of its being out of cultivation; but lying vacant we have certainly, it is the human element which comes in; it is very easy to get a hill farmer to a village near a station, but is very difficult for him to go back to the hills at some distance from it. Of course, a person bred and born on the hills does not care for society, and he is content to remain. He has not got infected with town ideas which would prevent him going back to the hill farm.

1139. Have you got a case of hill farms where you have not only bad land and wet seasons, but also the sheep rot. Have you met with any of those cases?—No, the sheep-rot does not prevail on the hill farms of Lincolnshire, but on the grass lands of Leicestershire.

1140. That is the worst case, where you have got a combination of those circumstances?—That is so.

1141. That is what I wanted to bring about, that one result of the depression is that you hit the landlords extremely heavily?—It is so.

1142. Another, and perhaps a subsidiary point is that it makes it more difficult to fill up any vacant farm on the lowest margin of cultivation?—That is so.

Cause of depression.

1143. (*Mr. Little.*) I think the general effect of your evidence is that this depression, as distinguished from that of 1880, is due to prices, whereas the former depression was in a great part due to seasons?—That is it in a nutshell.

1144. And that all classes of farmers and all classes of farms have suffered more or less?—Precisely so.

1145. Not equally, nor all at the same period, but all have suffered more or less?—Quite so.

1146. You said that the effect had been to draw a sharp dividing line between good and bad land?—Yes.

Facilities for marketing.

1147. Would not you consider that situation was a most important element; that the situation is much more important than it was formerly?—Yes.

1148. Proximity to markets?—Precisely.

1149. And railways?—I included that in the good and bad land.

1150. You do not mean natural fertility, but situation?—That combined with situation.

1151. I think that the least reduction you mentioned was on land near to Nottingham; that is an illustration of the effect of situation in proximity to markets?—That is so.

Restrictions in selling.

1152. They sell everything there, bringing back an equivalent?—That is so.

1153. What equivalent do you ask for?—In effect under the old agreement I think it is 1*l.* to 30*s.* an acre.

1154. One pound for each acre, from which the produce is removed?—Yes.

1155. It does not depend upon the value of the article; the price that the produce makes?—No, it is not done in this case.

1156. It is not unusual in an agreement to stipulate for one-third or a certain proportion of the sum made by selling?—That is the more general form and that is the one we prefer.

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1157. Do you consider it fairest?—I prefer the equivalent on that, we should get a fixed price per acre which the tenant has arranged with myself, he having farmed that land perhaps for 20 or 30 years.

1158. I thought you generally preferred the other system?—No, Mr. Paget's plan.

1159. The system which calls upon the farmer to bring back one-third part of the value of the thing sold is not a satisfactory one; it is not a fair one, is it?—I would not put it in that way. It would vary according to the farm, the land, and the sort of produce that went to the market. I think Mr. Paget fixed his with regard to what was likely to go to Nottingham from his particular farm, but it might not be the case to the north of Nottingham.

1160. Speaking from your experience is not the price of hay at the present 6*l.* per ton?—It is more than that.

1161. Take it at 6*l.* on the farm. He would have to return 2*l.* per acre as a consequence of selling that hay, and is not that rather a severe demand from the farmer, it is more than the manurial value of the hay?—Yes, it would be.

1162. When hay is 3*l.* a ton the return would be 1*l.*?—Yes, it would; one-third.

1163. And if that represented fairly the manurial value is there any reason why the tenant should be called upon to pay 2*l.* because he sells at 6*l.*, whereas he only pays 1*l.* when he sells at 3*l.* per ton?—I do not think there is; I think the one I refer to is the only one where that clause is in the agreement, but the effect is that if the tenant sells a particular thing—he very often does—and if we can satisfy ourselves that he is not robbing the land we do not mind, but if he is doing that persistently and is ruining the land, the valuer on whom it depends in the case of a man leaving a farm has a very strong feeling against allowing compensation for more than one year. They say, "If you "were dissatisfied you should have given notice to the "tenant."

1164. But stipulations of that kind might lead to claims when men are quitting farms?—Yes.

1165. A rigid agreement demands a certain return?—Where there is a specific clause; but it is only in one case out of the whole.

Restrictions in cultivation.

1166. And your covenants as to cultivation, are they stringent?—They are not stringent; they may not have two crops in succession but they often take them, and unless they do so unfairly we do not interfere.

1167. You are satisfied with the stipulation, good husbandry?—That is so.

1168. That is sufficient?—Yes, and satisfactory.

Reduction of rents.

1169. You have been obliged to make very large reductions notwithstanding that the estates you have been concerned with were well equipped and that a large expenditure had been previously made?—That is so.

1170. You would describe them as well started and with rents fairly adjusted?—Yes.

1171. The reductions which you have been obliged to make are reductions ranging from 45 per cent. to 14 or 15 or 16 per cent.?—That is so for estates of that character.

1172. Would you say that a tenant with capital coming in now at those reduced rents and under such improved conditions as have become a necessity in bad times could live and thrive?—Yes, because the rents are reduced greatly.

1173. The condition must be that he has sufficient capital, it must not be a tenant who has lost his capital?—That is where the mistake is, in a tenant farmer taking a farm too large for his capital.

1174. He must take it at the market value and under different conditions than those which obtained 20 years ago. He must have greater freedom of action?—He practically has in pretty nearly all our districts.

1175. He is allowed, but is not given the right by express agreement?—I do not say that it is given by express agreement. We do put a clause in the agreement that they may not put two crops of wheat corn in succession; if it is done once in a way it is overlooked, but if it is repeated constantly we interfere.

1176. You know that there is a great difference between doing a thing on sufferance and doing it by right?—I do.

1177. A tenant coming in on an estate such as you manage, for instance, upon entirely new conditions, should you say to him, we cannot alter the agreement in your case?—If a tenant came with plenty of money who understood his business, I would be ready to discuss anything in reason, and any proprietor would accord with that.

1178. And that is one of the effects of depression that a tenant can now treat on equal terms with his landlord?—Certainly; he has the best of the bargain nearly always now-a-days.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

1179. You said that the compensation in your case was not under the Agricultural Holdings Act, but by custom?—That is so.

1180. Your custom was an exceedingly good one and much older than the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes, as long as I remember anything.

1181. And it is satisfactory to landlords and tenants?—Yes, the only objection was that there was a tendency to get a little too high, because if it was satisfactory to an out-going tenant it would be satisfactory to the in-coming tenant, and where there was a tendency to strain that we found a difficulty.

1182. Would you tell me whether you make your custom a substituted agreement or whether you simply disregard the Act. Do you provide in your agreement that compensation should be by the custom of the country?—We do not touch that in the agreement for this reason, that the custom varies slightly in different parts of the country. It is liberal in all parts both in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire and is the fairest. I leave them to tenant-right valuation.

1183. Are you not distinctly acting in contravention of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Not that we know of, we consider that our proceedings are more liberal.

1184. I am not complaining of them, I know that they are satisfactory to those who are interested, but does not the Agricultural Holdings Act provide that compensation shall not be by custom for anything provided for by the Agricultural Holdings Act?—But a great deal is not provided for.

1185. Take manures, which include feeding stuffs?—This, I may say, that we have never had a case under the Act.

1186. The valuers' opinion and public opinion are strong enough to enable them to entirely ignore the provisions of the Act?—I may say so.

1187. And the procedure?—The procedure is never used in my case. I was appointed by the Board of Agriculture as one of the umpires in case of difference. I receive 20 notices in different terms, and none of them ever came to a hearing. The mere fact that it applied to a third party settled the case.

1188. You have not had any experience of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I have not.

1189. You could not tell us whether there is anything in the procedure under that Act that induces the valuers and the farmers to prefer custom to the Act? Is the procedure more simple with you than under the Act?—I do not know that.

1190. You do not have to give notice of claim under custom?—It would be simpler, there is no notice.

1191. And you do not provoke a counter-claim by the landlord?—There is no notice. A farm is vacated and they appoint two valuers, and an umpire settles the case between them.

1192. And the incoming tenant pays the valuation upon entry?—He does upon entry?

Expenditure on improvements.

1193. You spoke of having spent money under the Settled Land Act; the effect of that is to relieve the tenant for life, is it not?—Certainly.

1194. It is better for him than under the Lands Improvement Acts?—Yes, because where there is money in the family they can invest it in their own estate.

1195. But it is sunk?—Sunk entirely.

1196. Under the old Improvement Acts the landlord replaces the capital by instalments?—In 30 years, about.

1197. But in this case it is entirely sunk, and in the other the tenant for life is paying instalments of capital for 30 years?—That is so.

Quality of labour.

1198. With regard to labour, you said that the efficiency of the labourer had decreased; would you say that that was generally the case with all classes of labourers, or is it confined to merely the ordinary labourer?—I think it is more specially confined to the ordinary labourer, and that it varies in different districts and different counties. Certainly I think it has on the whole deteriorated in quality.

1199. You are, perhaps, aware that that has been the complaint whenever there has been an inquiry of this kind?—I am aware of it.

1200. In 1880 that was so?—I am going on personal knowledge for 50 years in the same village.

1201. It must have been very good a hundred years ago if it has been declining ever since?—I can speak from my own personal knowledge. I remember that we had six labourers in constant employ, and they were first-class men who could mow, sow, stack, drain, hedge, and do everything; we have not a single man of that description in the parish now. Men who are now farm labourers would not in the old days have been classed as second-class men, and I do not see who is going to replace them.

Cost of labour.

1202. You said you were very much surprised to find that notwithstanding the increased wages the total cost of your labour had not increased per acre?—That is so.

1203. But your expenditure has increased, the expenditure has been transferred from manual labour to machinery?—What I meant was that the cost of manual labour had not increased per acre; there would be expenditure for those machines to be taken into consideration.

1204. If the wages had risen from 10*s.* to 15*s.* per week the cost of labour would be much more unless you substituted machinery for the men?—No doubt.

1205. Then you have diminished the cost of labour per acre by changes in your system of farming?—To a certain extent we must have done. Take the case of hay, I remember as a boy pretty nearly every operation was done by hand, you mowed, you tedded, and you raked without machines, but without the help of machinery we should not have got on with the decline of labour.

Prices of wheat.

1206. If it would not be too much trouble, I should like to have the prices which wheat realised for the years you have omitted; it would be interesting to compare them with the Gazette prices?—In 1883 wheat was 42*s.* per quarter; in 1884, it was 39*s.*; in 1885, it was 33*s.*; in 1886, it was 31*s.*; in 1887, it was 33*s.*; in 1888, it was 31*s.* 6*d.*; in 1889, 31*s.*; in 1890, 31*s.*; and in 1891, it rose to 36*s.* per quarter.

Tithe.

1207. The effect of the recent Tithe Act where tenants had engaged to pay the tithe is that the landlord now pays it without an equivalent?—I have acted for estates under two conditions, in one case where it was always paid by the proprietor and the other case where the tenants paid it. In the case where the tenants have to pay it by the Act, the owner has to pay it; it is perfectly in vain for me to say we want to raise the rent by the amount of that tithe; the tenant simply says, "I cannot under the present circumstances pay it." It is but a small proportion and we cannot disturb a good tenant for that amount.

1208. It transfers the payment to the landlord?—It is practically a reduction of rent.

1209. You said that much of your land had been freed from tithe by giving land in lieu of it?—Tithe free under the Inclosure Act, that is to say, if an allotment the land is given in lieu of it.

1210. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I will only ask you one or two questions. Can you give us any reason for this falling off in the quality of labour which I understand is one of your difficulties? I think you said that the men were all leaving for the towns?—All the young men.

Rural depopulation

1211. What is the reason of that?—They prefer the life of a town; if a man goes as a porter at a railway station, or to be a policeman, or to be a carter in one of the larger towns, all that has an attraction, and an equal rate of wages would not keep him. I have got them to give their own explanations, and I invariably ask a man what his reason is for going, and that is the common reply.

1212. Can you think of anything to induce the better kind of labourer to stay in the country, has anything occurred to you?—I have thought it over very often indeed. It cannot be from want of gardens, because there is no estate that I have anything to do with that has not an abundance of gardens and allotments, and there is no difficulty but the greatest readiness to pro-

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vide gardens. It is not that, nor is it the cottages, for landlords are all in favour of having good cottages. I do not see that there is any remedy, but I see that it is a serious item.

Changes of tenancy and reduction of rent.

1213. In your various estates you have had changes with the farmers, changes of tenancy?—That is so.

1214. When you have had a change of tenancy, you have had to reduce the rent, have you not?—Very often.

1215. The tenant would not take it without, perhaps?—He would not.

1216. He makes his own terms?—And very good terms for himself, too.

Customs of tenure.

1217. At the same time that he makes a demand for a reduction in the rent, have you been confronted with any requests for changes in the agreement or custom under which they hold?—I have, and in all cases have acceded to them where it was reasonable.

1218. So that when they have asked for changes in that respect they have been able to get them?—They have.

1219. When you speak of "custom" you refer to the various customs that prevail in the different counties with which you are acquainted?—Yes, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Huntingdonshire.

1220. Which is the highest?—We are inclined to think the north part of Nottinghamshire is higher than Lincolnshire.

1221. Can you say per acre what is the average, roughly speaking?—It would run often between 30*s.* and 40*s.* per acre, and in some cases higher in Nottinghamshire.

1222. The tenants you have had to deal with prefer custom to any other arrangement?—They do. I have never had a single case put under the Act.

1223. In that case does the custom work well?—Yes.

1224. Without any trouble whatever?—Yes, without any trouble whatever.

Tenants' capital.

1225. (*Lord Cobham.*) Referring to the question of farming with capital, do you think the incoming tenants bring now-a-days as much capital per acre for the cultivation of a farm as they did formerly?—No, they do not.

1226. There is less capital?—Yes.

1227. Is less required?—No, I do not think so. It is a very general case that many of them are short of capital.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to Thursday next at 12 o'clock.

Fourth Day.

Thursday, 23rd November 1893.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., in the Chair.

Viscount Cobham.
The Right Hon. Baron Vernon.
The Right Hon. Henry Chaplin, M.P.
Sir Robert Nigel Fitzhardinge Kingscote, K.C.B.
Robert Giffen, Esq., C.B.
Charles Isaac Elton, Esq., Q.C.
Captain Owen Thomas.
Francis Allston Channing, Esq., M.P.
John Clay, Esq.
Cornelius Neale Dalton, Esq.
Robert Lacey Everett, Esq., M.P.
John Gilmour, Esq.
George Lambert, Esq., M.P.
William Cutlack Little, Esq.
Walter Hume Long, Esq., M.P.
Charles Whitehead, Esq., F.L.S.

Herbert Lyon, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. Crawford, Esq., } *Assistant*
Freeman Thomas, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. William Harrison called and examined.

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1228. (*Chairman.*) You are a tenant farmer, residing at Hutton's Ambo in Yorkshire?—Yes.

1229. And you are also a valuer of tenant right?—Yes.

1230. And with your brother you farm 900 acres of land in that district?—That is so.

1231. And you are also President of the Malton Agricultural Club, and Honorary Secretary of the Yorkshire Union of Agricultural Clubs and Chambers of Agriculture?—Yes.

1232. That Union comprises 22 local clubs and chambers and has a membership of about 2,000?—That is so.

1233. Have you been nominated by the Yorkshire Union to come before this Commission for the purpose of expressing their views?—I have. I might say that it is rather my own views—the Union have not as yet expressed any views upon the subject.

1234. Have they asked you to come here to state your own views?—Yes.

1235. They have had no discussion?—There has been no discussion.

1236. Nor any delegation to you to represent their views?—Not at all.

1237. But still they have asked you to come here?—That is so.

Cause of depression.

1238. Will you state what is your view of the present condition of agriculture in your district?—It is in a low, depressed state, and that depression is due to the low prices occasioned, I contend, by foreign competition and bad seasons.

1239. How long has it been in this condition?—For 10 or 15 years.

Reductions of rent.

1240. Has there been a considerable reduction of rents?—Yes, there have been reductions of rent to the extent of 30 per cent., and in some cases 50 per cent.

1241. Who do you hold under yourself?—Mr. Henry Darley, of Buttercrambe, Sir James Walker, of Sandhutton, Mr. A. W. M. Bosville, of Budlington, and Captain Starkie, of Hutton's Ambo.

1242. What have been the reductions in your own case?—In my case, the rent of the land under Sir James Walker has been reduced in 20 years 50 per cent. The farm has changed hands in that time. 30 years ago there was 21,000*l.* paid for it, and there has been about 10,000*l.* expended on it in the way of buildings and draining. It was sold for 12,500*l.* about three months ago.

1243. What is the acreage?—439 acres.

1244. What has the actual rent been reduced from?—The actual rent has been reduced from 850*l.* to 470*l.*

1245. (*Mr. Channing.*) How long ago is it since the 850*l.* was charged?—21 years ago.

1246. (*Chairman.*) And when was the reduction made?—The reduction has been since that time, at least, we had it on lease for 21 years, but the lease runs out on April the 6th, 1894. During that time, about 15 years ago, when the depression commenced, and after it had continued for a year or two, we had it reduced 200*l.* a year.

1247. How long is that ago?—That is about 10 years ago.

1248. It was taken by you on lease for 21 years at 850*l.*, was it?—That was including tithe, the tithe is 100*l.*

1249. The rent was 750*l.*, and you paid 100*l.* for tithe?—Yes.

1250. It was taken for 21 years?—21 years.

1251. And 10 years ago the rent was reduced by 200*l.*?—Ten years ago.

1252. What year was the rent taken in?—1873, I think.

1253. And a further reduction was made when?—50*l.* a year from the late owner, and now it is leased for a further seven years, dating from April 6th, 1894, at 470*l.* a year, clear of tithe.

1254. Then in the interval since 15 years ago and the present, was there any further reduction or not?—No.

1255. You have paid 550*l.* up to the present time?—No, there was 50*l.* taken off; it is reduced to 500*l.* at the present time.

1256. 500*l.* a year up to the present time?—Yes, and it will be to April 6th, 1894.

1257. Now you have got a further lease for seven years to run from 1894 at 470*l.*?—That is so.

Expenditure on improvements.

1258. During that time has the landlord expended any money in improvements?—Yes, the landlord and ourselves have spent on the draining and additional buildings in the way of covered yards and Dutch barns, to the extent of about 10,000*l.* I would here state that the 10,000*l.* includes cost of improvements since the time it was purchased, seven years before we entered on the 21 years lease, during that time, viz., seven years, the owner's son occupied it.

1259. During this 21 years?—28 years.

1260. And quite recently it has been sold, subject to the lease to you for seven years?—Yes, for 12,500*l.*

Reduction of rent.

1261. And you will be paying the landlord 470*l.* a year in future for rent, and the landlord will have to pay the tithe?—The landlord will have to pay the tithe.

1262. How much is that?—About 70*l.* a year.

1263. Therefore it is practically 400*l.* a year?—Yes, that is so.

1264. As compared with 750*l.*, 21 years ago?—Yes.

Effect of reduction.

1265. What has been your experience during that period as regards profit or loss?—My own experience is that with the reduction of rent we have been able to make the farm remunerative.

1266. With the reduction of the rent to 470*l.* a year you have been able to make it pay?—Yes.

1267. I presume you would not have taken a new lease for 470*l.* a year if you had not found it pay?—No, we should not have done so.

1268. Therefore the main loser has been the landlord in this case?—Yes, he has; he reduced the rent to meet the times.

Freedom of cropping and sale.

1269. But you have not realised serious losses yourself, and you have taken a new lease?—That is so. I may state that the farm is held under a lease with freedom of cropping and freedom of sale of produce, and the land would not have been in as good a condition if we had not been allowed to sell as we thought best in the best markets.

1270. What is the proportion of arable to grass land on this farm?—On this Bossall farm which was held under Sir James Walker there are 130 acres of grass and the remainder is arable.

1271. What does it grow mainly—wheat?—Wheat and barley, and oats, beans, potatoes, and turnips.

Reductions of rent.

1272. You have told us your experience with regard to one farm, now what is your experience as to the other?—The rent has been reduced correspondingly to this; not quite so much as this. The rent 15 years ago was 428*l.*; it is 314*l.* to-day.

1273. What is the acreage?—It is 243 acres; that was held under Mr. A. W. M. Bosville.

1274. Did you take it without a lease?—It is a yearly tenancy; it is reduced to 314*l.*

1275. When was that reduction made?—That has been similar to the other farm. In the first instance we received 10 per cent. back and then we got 20 per cent., and finally a permanent reduction was made about eight years ago.

1276. Has it continued at that?—It is so now.

1277. Have you the same remark to make that you made with regard to the other, that you are not losing by it?—We are not losing by it. It is held under an agreement prohibiting the sale of produce, but still we do sell off without the interference of the landlord. He does not put his agreement in force as regards the sale of produce.

1278. You have had a relaxation in fact of any condition in that respect?—Yes.

1279. Have you another farm?—We have got another under Mr. Darley; it is all grass. That is 124 acres, at 160*l.* a year rent.

1280. Has there been a reduction?—No. That was taken about 10 years ago at that rent, and it remains at that still.

1281. Do I understand you to say that that is all pasture?—Yes.

1282. Do you hold that from year to year?—Yes, it is a yearly tenancy. The other farm, No. 4, held under Captain Starkie, is only a small farm of 70 acres at a rent of 94*l.*, and that I only took last year.

1283. What is that, pasture or what?—Sixty acres of it is arable, and the rest of it is pasture.

1284. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) How much is the whole farm?—Seventy acres, and there will be 60 acres of it arable.

1285. (*Chairman.*) You took that farm last year at that rent?—Yes, 94*l.* a year.

1286. In the case of the farms that you have yourself, with the reductions of rent, have you met the depression?—That is so. I may not be able to make a fair remuneration out of them. I do not say that it is as much as we made previous to the fall in prices.

1287. But still you have done fairly well?—Yes, fairly satisfactorily.

1288. Is that the experience of the other farmers in your district?—I am afraid not.

Freedom of sale.

1289. Have they not had the benefit of the same reductions of rent?—Well, I think they have, but I do not think that they have had freedom of sale of produce, and in some cases where they have had freedom of sale of produce they have not taken advantage of it, and I attribute to that free sale of produce very largely our farms paying better than those of our neighbours.

1290. Do you attach very great importance to freedom in that respect?—I do.

1291. And that has been the reason that you have been able to do better than your neighbours?—It is one of the primary reasons.

1292. It has enabled you to get through the bad times?—Yes.

1293. Have you sold straw from the farm?—Yes.

Price of straw.

1294. Has the price of straw increased in the interval?—It fluctuates. Twenty years ago it was 4*l.* per ton, and I believe to-day in large towns it is 4*l.* It has in different years fluctuated down to as low as 30*s*. per ton and up to 4*l*.

1295. Is it 4*l*. now?—It is 4*l*. now.

1296-7. Have you got a good market for the straw?—Yes. York is the principal market.

1298. What is the distance?—Ten miles.

1299. Could you get manure from York?—We make up the equivalent in the straw sold, by artificial manures, we only sell the surplus straw; I do not mean that we sell all the straw.

1300. But still that has been an important consideration?—It has been rather an important consideration in the way of wheat straw especially.

1301. It has to some extent made up for the low prices of the wheat?—Yes, it has helped to make up for the low prices of the wheat.

1302. Not wholly for the low prices of the wheat?—Not wholly, but to some extent?—in fact we keep growing wheat on account of getting a good sale for the straw.

Freedom of sale.

1303. But for that freedom of contract, and the power of selling the straw you would not grow the wheat?—We should discontinue growing more than is necessary for home use.

1304. You would not have grown it to the same extent?—No.

1305. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) By that I understand you mean the straw?—Yes, the straw.

1306. (*Chairman.*) You have considered, therefore, the freedom from conditions to have been of great importance in your case, and I think you said that some of your neighbours have not had that freedom?—They might have taken advantage in some cases but have not done so.

1307. And it is to some extent owing to that that they have not weathered the storm as well as you have?—I think so.

Remedy for depression.

1308. Will you go on to state what in your opinion are the remedies for the existing state of things?—I think the rent is the first; that might be a partial remedy.

1309. Have there been many changes of tenancy in your neighbourhood?—Yes.

Changes of tenancy.

1310. Have a considerable number of farmers left their holdings on account of the depression?—Yes, there have been changes.

1311. And other tenants have come in have they?—Other tenants have come in. I think that every man thinks that another man has a better farm than himself and when he gets there he finds it to be about the same.

Farms in hand.

1312. Then fresh tenants come in. Is there any land not in cultivation?—Not very much. There are some of the very high wold farms which are not out of cultivation but they are in the hands of the owners.

1313. But not much?—Not very much.

1314. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Are the owners cultivating them?—Yes, the owners are cultivating them.

1315. (*Chairman.*) Speaking generally in your district is it possible to find tenants for the farms?—Yes.

1316. At a rent?—Yes, at a rent.

1317. What in your opinion is the remedy for such evils as exist?—I have mentioned rent as a partial remedy but some people expect to meet their case from rent, which is an utter impossibility. I have taken an example of a farm to show that we cannot expect to get the remedy altogether by way of reduced rent.

Average reduction of rent.

1318. Before you come to that, what should you say is the average reduction of rent in the neighbourhood?—I should say 33 per cent.

1319. What would you say was the average rent per acre before the depression began—would it be 30*s*. per acre, or what is about the average?—I could not state what would be the average rent per acre. It varied from 3*l*. down to 1*l*.

1320. Taking your own farms, it was something over 30*s*. per acre?—Bossall Farm was 2*l*. per acre when we rented it first, and it is now 21*s*. 9*d*.

1321. Is that farm a fair illustration of the farms of the district?—I should think so.

1322. If that is so the average rent is somewhere over 1*l*. an acre, the landlord paying the tithe?—That is so.

1323. Therefore that has to be taken into account in making a comparison?—Yes.

Reduction of rent on a hypothetical farm in the district.

1324. You were going on to say that the mere reduction of the rent would not be sufficient?—That is so.

1325. What is your illustration?—I will take a farm, for example, of 300 acres of mixed land, say one third grass and two thirds arable.

1326. Is that a hypothetical farm?—I am taking this farm as a farm of fair quality to show that we cannot expect to have the remedy entirely from the reduction of rent.

1327. Whose farm is it?—I am only just supposing one.

1328. That is what I meant to ask you?—It is nobody's farm.

1329. I only want to know what the facts are, I was not quite certain whether it was an actual farm or a supposed farm that you were going to give as an illustration?—It is a supposed farm. I am taking it as land of a fair quality (because you asked for an average) and the reason I do that is that there are some lands on the high wolds which during those very bad wet seasons have suffered more than they would under more favourable circumstances having a better climate where they could get their harvest in somewhat better time. I have seen a few months ago corn stacked in the fields, and it is practically hardly worth threshing, so that those farms, I contend, have suffered more than other farms that are in a more favourable position. And on the other hand, if you come down to the very wet, cold, clay lands, those have suffered more than land of a fair quality.

1330. That farm that you are taking as an illustration, you suppose to be in the wolds?—I take it as land of a fair quality.

1331. (*Mr. Lambert.*) At what rental would it be?—I put it at 30*s*. per acre; that is what I call fair quality for a medium farm 20 years ago.

1332. (*Lord Vernon.*) Is that free of tithe and taxes?—The poor rates and highway rates come on that. I take that as the actual rent that the landlord would receive for it. I am giving the prices of stock and the produce of 20 years ago, what I suppose this farm would keep. I am assuming, in the first instance, that it would keep 100 ewes which would be fed, and that would produce 150 lambs. Those at a year old, fed up, should weigh properly treated, 72 lbs. each sheep.

1333. (*Chairman.*) I do not know whether you could go further in this direction of treating an imaginary farm?—I can give you what I consider the prices of the produce of that farm would have been 20 years ago in a few words if you like to have them.

1334. (*Mr. Channing.*) I understand that you are giving your general impression of the results of the farming of a farm of a general type in your neighbourhood 20 years ago and now?—That is so.

1335. (*Chairman.*) Will you state it briefly in your own way?—I take first as I said before, 150 lambs, and this year they would be 72 lbs. each, and taking it at 9d. per lb. the price 20 years ago, it would amount to 405*l*. At the present time, the same flock would realize 315*l*., or 7*d*. per lb. It was 9*d*. per lb. 20 years ago, and it is 7*d*. per lb. now. Taking the wool from the 150 sheep at 9 lbs. per head, and that at 1*s*. 9*d*. per lb. which was the price 20 years ago, I make 118*l*. 2*s*. 6*d*. as against 59*l*. 1*s*. 3*d*. to-day, the price to-day being 10½*d*. per lb. Then the wool from the 100 ewes I put at 61*l*. 5*s*. 20 years ago, and at the present price 30*l*. 12*s*. 6*d*. I estimate that 50 beasts could be kept on the farm, and out of this herd 12 could be sold annually, and estimating each animal at 50 stones weight, that would be 600 stones of beef, which if sold off at that time at 10*s*. per stone would have given 300*l*., the price to-day being 210*l*. as 7*s*. per stone. I will only trouble you with another item and that is wheat. 30 acres of wheat would be grown also, and putting this at 4 quarters per acre, at 60*s*. per quarter, the price 20 years ago would make 360*l*.; and the present price of wheat putting it at 30*s*. per quarter would make 180*l*. Therefore taking the beef and mutton, the wool and the wheat, 20 years ago they would have produced 1,244*l*. 7*s*. 6*d*.; and in the present year they would produce 794*l.* 13*s.* 9*d.*, that shows a difference of 449*l.* 13*s.* 9*d.*, and I take it, therefore, that that land has been reduced by 10*s.* an acre at the present time.

1336. Then according to that calculation this hypothetical farm would be unable to pay any rent at all ?—Yes.

1337. No rent at all ?—According to that calculation, I contend that the rent is not able to meet it.

1338. In your estimate of the wool are you taking the very highest or the very lowest weight ?—That weight of wool, anybody knows, from Leicester sheep is very easily produced. I know plenty of sheep that have 10 and 11 lbs. of wool, and it is not an uncommon thing if you go into Yorkshire they will say very readily that that statement is a low one instead of being a high one.

1339. I may take it generally that taking this hypothetical farm in your neighbourhood you have taken the prices of 20 years ago and compared them with the present ?—Yes.

1340. And that the difference is such that you do not see how any rent at all could be paid ?—You will find it is correct.

1341. Is that the conclusion you wish to arrive at, that the difference in price between 20 years ago and the present is such that you do not see how any rent could be paid ?—Not how any rent could be paid at all ; I say that that rent has been reduced by 10*s.* an acre, and I am not saying for one minute what profit was made out of that land 20 years ago. Those are open questions.

1342. There might have been a large profit then ?—There might have been.

1343. Therefore it would not be a fair comparison to take a year of very high profit and compare that with the present year of very low profit ?—No. I cannot say what profit would be made, and I do not say what profit might be made out of the present prices. I am not here to state that.

1344. At all events, the conclusion you draw is that a reduction of rent alone would not be sufficient to meet the difficulty in this hypothetical farm ?—That is why I took this out as an example.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

1345. What do you suggest as a further remedy beyond a reduction in rent ?—I suggest an amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883.

Laying down permanent grass.

1346. Will you state what that is ?—The first, is considering the low price of wheat, on clay lands—this is more especially directed to clay lands—where the wheat growing is dying out ; it cannot be any longer produced at a profit. That land has to be turned into something else, and I think it is agreed that the only thing that can be done with it is to lay it down to permanent grass. The Agricultural Holdings Act provides for a tenant laying that down as permanent grass if he has the consent of the owner, which will be found in the first part of the first schedule of the Act. There is very often some difficulty, and in my experience I have only known two or three cases where a landlord would give the tenant permission to lay land down to grass. If the tenant did it he did it at his own risk. I would suggest, there as an amendment in the Act that the laying down to permanent grass be transferred from part 1 of the first schedule to part 3 of that schedule where a tenant can go and execute that improvement, and he would get compensation at the end of the tenancy on giving two months' notice.

1347. In other words, that he should be allowed to do that without the consent of the landlord ?—That is so.

1348. And on the expiration of his tenancy he would get the compensation whether his landlord approved of the procedure or no ?—That is so if it is transferred to part 3, and ranks with cake and other things where a tenant can go and execute an improvement two months before the expiration of the tenancy and it can be settled by the valuer.

1349. As a land valuer between incoming and outgoing tenants has your experience shown you that that is a case where it might often occur where the tenants have not obtained compensation ?—That is so ; the tenants in several instances have laid land down to grass and have never got any compensation whatever.

1350. Cases have occurred within your own experience have they ?—Several of them.

1351. Where the land has been improved in value by laying it down to grass ?—Yes.

1352. And in consequence of the tenant not having got the consent of the landlord in writing he has failed to get compensation on the expiration of his tenancy ?—That is so.

1353. Could you give us any particular instances of that ?—I do not like to bring those cases out. I do not like to state them.

1354. You do not like to state the actual cases ?—No, I think it would not be fair.

1355. Without mentioning names, could you give us an illustration of what the tenant has lost owing to the state of the law ?—If I had brought my book here of the notes of valuing I could have taken those out. I cannot fall back upon that at the present time, but it is a question that is arising constantly as to tenants who have laid land down to pasture and the landlord has refused to give them compensation.

Notice to quit.

1356. (*Lord Vernon.*) Have you known many such cases ?—Yes, many cases. A tenant under a six months' notice to quit, after he gets this six months' notice cannot do anything with that land. It is true that a tenant does not deteriorate the value of the land by laying it to grass, but if he chose before leaving it to plough that grass up the landlord could not prohibit him and he could get some advantage. But it is in the interests of the community for that land to be kept in grass, and if it is ploughed out the public will suffer by that being done, in my opinion.

1357. (*Chairman.*) I understand that the tenant could to some extent recover part of the loss in that way which he would otherwise sustain ?—If he had 12 months he could, but under the six months' notice he could not.

1358. If he had 12 months' notice he could avoid the loss by ploughing up the land ?—Yes.

1359. But it is in the interests of the community that the land should not be ploughed up when once laid down to grass ?—If the land is in plough and is not yielding food sufficient it is in the interests of the community that it should be laid down to grass to make it remunerative and to produce beef and mutton for the public.

1360. Have there been cases in your experience where tenants have suffered seriously from want of compensation in this respect ?—I would not say seriously, but what I state is this, more especially I believe that there is a good deal of land that wants laying down to grass, and tenants would freely do it if they could be compensated for it. That goes rather to show a serious loss in the past.

Drainage.

1361. Is there any other point which occurs to you arising upon the Agricultural Holdings' Act ?—I think drainage should be transferred from part 2 to part 3 of the first schedule, the same as laying down land to permanent grass. It is true that the tenant can go to the landlord as to land that wants draining, and if the landlord does not feel disposed to do it, the tenant can do it according to the Act within two months of giving notice he can step in and do it and charge 5 per cent. upon it. I have seen cases where land has been drained by the Government where it has been dreadfully badly done, hundreds of acres have been done without any benefit at all to the tenant. It is true it has not been properly drained, it has been drained perhaps too deep. A practical man who overlooks the farm is more likely to know that the land wants draining than those coming perhaps out of town.

1362. Do I understand you to say that it would be better if it were left entirely to the tenant if he wishes to effect the drainage ?—Yes.

1363. Subject to compensation on leaving his holding under the third part of the Agricultural Holdings Act ?—That is so.

1364. It is the case that both according to the Yorkshire custom and according to the custom of the county of Lincoln drainage can be executed without any notice, and that the tenant gets compensation ?—Not in Yorkshire ; I never came across such a case.

Buildings.

1365. Is there anything else in the Agricultural Holdings Act that you would wish to speak about ?—There is nothing further there that I would recommend, only an addition to it with reference to the accommodation of stock. I know several instances where there is not sufficient accommodation on the farms for the stock in order to enable the tenant to make the best of the land. The landlord very likely in some instances is not in a position to spend any money upon the property and the tenant has not got any capital either, and the thing is wasting for want of capital and proper buildings being put on the farm. I would suggest in a case similar to this that the Board of Agriculture should be applied to, and that they should send a practical man over to speak as to what buildings are required, and that the Board of Agriculture should advance a loan to make the necessary buildings and charge as low interest as possible, and that it should be made a charge upon the land.

1366. And that it should be the first charge on the land?—Yes.

1367. Taking precedence of mortgages and so forth?—I do not know; that would be rather difficult to settle where there was a mortgage already existing on the land.

1368. (*Lord Vernon.*) But the Lands Improvement Company do make a charge on everything?—I do not know in the case of an existing mortgage how that could be made a first charge.

State loans.

1369. (*Chairman.*) The essence of your proposal is that the money should be provided by the Government under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

1370. And presumably on better terms than are given by voluntary societies that lend money for drainage; is that your idea?—Yes.

1371. Is it your suggestion that the money should be paid off within a term of years?—I do not know; if the landlord is not in a position to do so, I think that he should be in a position to pay it off.

1372. What is your proposal; I only want to know?—I would not venture to say.

1373. But at all events the money should be lent by the Government?—Yes.

1374. And the terms should be better than those where the money is lent by the drainage societies; is that so? I understood you to say that the drainage is to be effected in this manner without the landlord's consent?—Well, if you put that, this is more applicable to buildings—I am not applying this to drainage—this is with reference to buildings.

1375. Am I to understand from you that the expenditure in this case on buildings is to be on the application of the tenant, with the consent of the Agricultural Department, but without necessarily the consent of the landlord?—No, there should be the consent of the landlord as well.

1376. I did not understand you so. The landlord has to consent. The motive to the landlord would be that the money would be lent on better terms than he could raise ordinarily by mortgage?—That is so.

1377. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Then it amounts to this, that the only change in the present position would be, as the Chairman has put it, the advancing of the money by the Government at a cheaper rate than it is now obtained from the ordinary land companies?—That is so.

1378. (*Chairman.*) You do not commit yourself to the term, if any, over which the repayment is to be spread. Is there anything else you wish to refer to in the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I think that is all.

Local taxation.

1379. Turning to the next question—that of rates; what have you to say?—That is as to local taxation. I am of opinion that the land has to bear an unfair proportion of the rates, and that the land is paying more than the towns to the relief of the poor. I take my own neighbourhood in the Malton district, a shopkeeper is rated at 50*l.* a year to the poor and I will take, for instance, my own farm where I am rated at 350*l.* a year; and 1*s.* in the £ is the general run of the poor rates. I will assume that I pay 17*l.* 10*s.* a year and the shopkeeper is paying 2*l.* 10*s.* I am quite sure that his shop is as remunerative and he can make as much out of the shop at 50*l.* a year as a farmer can out of his farm at 350*l.* a year. I am paying 17*l.* 10*s.* and he is only paying 2*l.* 10*s.* Further, the population of the United Kingdom has increased 36 per cent. since 1855, and that increased population is residing in the large towns and cities. It is very clear to all of us that the population of the rural districts is decreasing. I think it is unfair that the land should pay to keep the increased poor in the towns. Further, remembering that we have only got produce in this country to feed about seven millions and that we are having 30 millions of food imported, I think that the land in this country should not pay more poor rates, or be saddled with more poor rates than actually represent the value of its produce. I have suggested that the other part after that proportion should be paid out of the National Exchequer.

Poor rate.

1380. You stated that your poor rates are 1*s.* in the £?—Yes.

1381. Has that been about the rate during the last 20 years?—That has been so. It has not varied much in Yorkshire—not in our part of Yorkshire. I do not know what it may have been elsewhere.

1382. Has it varied in your parish?—No.

1383. Taking your first farm on which you paid 750*l.* and a tithe of 100*l.* 20 years ago, would the poor rates then have been 1*s.* in the £?—Yes.

1384. And are they 1*s.* in the £ now?—They are the same yet. I wish to add here that the poor rate would be more than 1*s.* in the £ now if we did not get the contribution from Government.

1385. Then you have got the advantage of the difference between the 1*s.* in the £ upon 750*l.* of rent 20 years ago, and 470*l.* rent at the present time?—That is so, we have got that advantage.

1386. Is that generally the case in your district that the tenants have got the full advantage of the reduction of rent, in the reduction of the aggregate payments that they are making to the poor law?—They have got the same rate. The rent is the basis for the rateable value.

Income tax.

1387. And I presume you have had the same benefit in the reduction of the payment of income tax?—Much the same benefit from the income tax.

1388. Have you paid generally upon the rent?—Upon the rent.

1389. You have not paid upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer's plan, on the actual profits?—No.

1390. I presume you are aware that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has allowed you to pay upon your actual profits?—I am.

1391. I presume that the profits, therefore, are more than half of the rent; is that so?—In that particular case I would not say.

1392. You have not taken advantage of that option to pay on the actual profits?—No.

1393. And you are perfectly aware of it?—Yes.

Highway rate.

1394. What is your next proposal?—The same remark applies to the highways. We should not pay more for the maintenance of the roads in proportion to our production. Food is imported from foreign countries to feed the people, and our roads are used for its conveyance without paying anything towards the maintenance of the highways. The same principle should apply to the roads as I suggest with regard to the poor rates.

1395. What has been the change in respect to the highways; has the rate been about the same during the last 20 years?—Well, the roads have cost about the same to keep up.

1396. Has your highway rate been about the same proportion in the £?—The rateable value has been reduced about 20 per cent. The rates vary. They are not uniform. They vary from 4*d.* in the £ according to the years. Of course, in bad seasons, the roads get cut up.

1397. What is the highway rate now?—At the present time it is 8*d.*

1398. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What was it 20 years ago?—I am not prepared to say.

1399. (*Chairman.*) Then you have got the benefit of the reduction of rent in that respect?—Well, the roads have still to be kept up; the rates have still to be paid. If the rateable value is lower in the union we have got to pay more in the £ to meet that difference.

Freedom of cropping.

1400. I think you consider that there should be greater freedom of cropping allowed?—Yes.

1401. You were going to say something about a beer tax, were you not?—I think that all beer should be brewed from barley, malt, and hops, and that on all foreign barley a duty should be put. It cannot be said that it is food; it is a luxury or beverage, whatever you like to term it, and it is not a necessary of life. Of

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course I think it would do more to help agriculture, the compulsory brewing from barley, malt, and hops, and a tax or duty on foreign barley, than anything else I can suggest.

Duty on foreign barley.

1402. It would rather increase the price of barley?—We expect it would do a bit.

1403. Then it would be a considerable advantage to the land that grows barley?—Yes, to any land; it would be an advantage to grow that instead of wheat.

1404. It would be a partial remedy, because it would only assist certain lands?—I daresay it would assist most lands. It would not assist grass land, but all arable land it would assist.

Income tax.

1405. Then go on to the next proposal, with regard to the income-tax?—I would simply put this: This is one of the things that the Yorkshire Union passed a resolution upon a short time ago:—"That the basis of taxation under Schedule B. should be reduced to not more than one-third of the rent, and that the basis should be uniform for the three kingdoms." They considered when that resolution was passed that the profits of the farmers generally would not exceed one-third of the rent.

1406. Am I to understand that in all cases it should be assessed on one-third of the rent irrespective of whether the profits were higher or lower?—Yes.

1407. Then in the event of the farmer not making a profit of one third of the rent, should he still pay the income tax on the one third?—Yes.

1408. Then with regard to freedom of cropping?—I have stated that before.

1409. You have stated your opinion?—I do not know more.

1410. I should like to know how that would be effected?—There should be certainly a return where there is freedom to sell. There should be some restriction as to what a tenant should bring back to the farm—the manurial value of the products sold off.

Freedom of cropping and sale.

1411. But do you think that this should be effected by the law—the freedom of cropping—or is it a matter of opinion that it is desirable?—If it be an advantage to have freedom of sale of produce, and it is prohibited by an agreement, the tenant simply is fixed and he cannot do it.

1412. All that I want to gather from you is whether you think that this greater freedom of cropping and of sale of produce should be effected by the Legislature?—Yes, I think that should be put in the Agricultural Holdings Act.

1413. And in what form would you effect that? Is it by prohibition of agreement between landlords and tenants to that effect?—It should be put in the Act that a tenant can be free to sell provided he brings back to the land the manurial value of the produce sold off. If he can sell the produce and can use the proceeds to better advantage on the farm I think he ought to have a right to do it. For instance, if he could sell hay at an exorbitant price, the manurial value of hay is only about 15*s*. per ton, and if he can sell the hay at 5*l*. surely it is better to sell that hay and bring the 15*s*. worth of manure back on to the farm.

1414. I want to ascertain how it should be effected, in what manner the proposal would take any concrete form?—By a clause in the Agricultural Holdings Act giving liberty for a tenant to sell off the produce provided that he brings back to the land the manurial value which he has removed from it.

1415. I understand that you desire that the Agricultural Holdings Act should contain a clause to that effect?—Yes.

1416. Then with regard to cropping?—I take it in Yorkshire that one very large estate on the Yorkshire wolds—one of the largest estates—I do not care to give names, is strictly tied down to the four-course system, and the land is practically played out in growing seeds and turnips. Cropping is taken by the landlord every year, and the tenants on that estate are not allowed by any means to deviate from that course of cropping. If the tenant does deviate he will very likely get a notice to quit at the end of the year.

1417. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Could you give the size of the estate?—I do not know quite. There are thousands of acres of it. It is one of the largest estates on the wolds. I should be safe in saying that it is about 15,000 or 20,000 acres.

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1418. (*Chairman.*) Have you got any examples of agreements?—I have not got examples of agreements for that particular estate. I have got other examples of agreements which would bear out to some extent what I said before about freedom of sale, on Lord Wenlock's estate. That is a very large estate.

1419. Will you give us a sample?—Yes. You mean to see the copy of the agreement.

1420. Just read the clause?—This is with reference to the crop. It says that "Not less than one-sixth of the arable land shall be sown with seeds, with or without a corn crop following fallow, during the last year of the tenancy. The original cost of clover, hay, and grass seeds so sown shall be valued to the outgoing tenant on production of proper vouchers, provided such seeds have not been eaten or damaged by cattle, horses, or sheep, and have been sown with the first crop after a fallow. That not more than two white straw crops shall be taken in succession, nor more than three white straw crops be taken without the intervention of a summer turnip or rape fallow." That is taking two white straw crops in succession, and not more than three white straw crops without a fallow.

Land court.

1421. Have you formed any opinion as to the expediency of a land court?—I do not care about a land court. I think it would create discord very likely betwixt landlord and tenant, and I do not see any use of a land court. It is not our opinion in Yorkshire at the present moment that there should be one.

1422. Are you able to say that it is not the opinion of the societies that you represent?—That is not the opinion of the societies I represent at any rate.

1423. They are not favourable to a land court?—I do not think they are favourable at the present time.

Freedom of cropping and sale.

1424. Do they think that the amendments that you suggested in the Agricultural Holdings Act would be sufficient?—Yes; freedom to sell the produce, and more freedom of cropping; those are the things.

1425. Have you had discussions in your societies on these questions?—For years we have been discussing the freedom of cropping and sale, more especially freedom of cropping. There are a good many estates in Yorkshire where they are tied down to the four-course system and the landlords do not allow them to depart from that agreement. Although it is vetoed in Lord Wenlock's agreements he allows his tenants to sell the produce.

1426. Has there not been considerable relaxation of those conditions in consequence of the depression?—I believe there has.

1427. The difficulty is not so great as it was?—The tenants are breaking through the agreements.

1428. Owing to the exigencies of the times?—Yes, and the sooner the better.

1429. (*Mr. Channing.*) Would you say that that relaxation is by a specific agreement, or is it merely by the verbal consent of the landlord at the time?—There is a relaxation in the agreements. Still the agreements hold the tenants to some line of cropping, but they are not so stringent as they were. A good many landlords now when a tenant asks permission to sell off certain produce allow him to do it.

1430. (*Chairman.*) Is there any other point you desire to mention?—I believe that is the whole.

Co-operation.

1431. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Have you anything to say with regard to co-operation?—Yes, there is the question of co-operation.

1432. (*Chairman.*) You do not think there is much to be gained by co-operation, I see?—That has been discussed several times in our clubs and we have not seen it favourably. I think it stifles competition and practically it tends to form syndicates, and when syndicates are formed they fix their own prices.

Expenditure on improvements.

1433. (*Lord Vernon.*) You said that 10,000*l*. had been spent in improvements on that farm that you mentioned of 439 acres?—I have given it in round numbers.

1434. Do you consider that that improvement was essential—it was not a fancy improvement?—I must say this, that they are the best buildings I have seen in Yorkshire.

1435. Are they rather fancy buildings?—They are not fancy buildings; they are useful buildings. For instance, the stackyard is covered in, and covered-in yards for stock.

1436. What do you consider a fair rate of interest on the capital invested in farming?—Do you mean for a tenant farmer to receive?

Rate of interest on owners and tenants capital.

1437. Yes, for a tenant farmer to receive?—It would depend upon the capital invested.

1438. What I mean is what would be a fair rate of interest on the capital invested?—I think he should have 10 per cent.

1439. Then on the 430-acre farm what capital per acre do you consider it proper to put on?—We put 6,000*l.* on it.

1440. (*Chairman.*) On that one farm?—On that one farm at Bossall. Perhaps you will think that is a large amount but we keep a good many horses. I think in breeding horses at the present time we have 2,000*l.* invested.

1441. Is that a high class of horse?—Yes, they are hackney horses.

1442. (*Lord Vernon.*) I assume from what you have told the Chairman that you have made over the rent of 470*l.* a year in profit?—I did not say that.

1443. It is a natural assumption from your evidence?—I do not think that I should state it before this Commission what I did make.

1444. I was trying to compare the rate of interest that you considered fair for the farmer to make, with the rate of interest that the landowner would make; because the land was bought for 21,000*l.*, and there has been 10,000*l.* laid down and he gets 470*l.* a year, which would be about 1 per cent.; and according to your statement of evidence you have given here, you have not paid more than the rent of 470*l.*, and that, on the capital, would be about 12 or 14 per cent?—But the landlord is making more than 1 per cent.

1445. (*Chairman.*) I do not understand that the witness has made a profit equal to the rent?—No.

1446. (*Lord Vernon.*) It is a natural assumption that he would pay on the lower rate?—I do not think it is fair to take that as what would be done generally because the profits that were got from the horses would be separate from the farming. That comes out of the man's head and not out of the land.

1447. But yours is hardly a typical case?—No.

1448. It is not a typical case of farming?—I think it is a typical case of farming. All those horses are kept and their food is entirely brought on the farm, and this farm is improved in consequence of those horses being kept.

1449. (*Chairman.*) The profits came out of the head rather than the land?—That is so.

1450. It is an illustration of brains being applied to farming?—That is it.

1451. (*Lord Vernon.*) But what I mean is that this case where 10,000*l.* is spent on the 439-acre farm where a capital of 21,000*l.* was invested is hardly a typical case of average farming?—It is not, because I contend that the case would be where a man, as I showed in the first instance, produces all the stock and fattens it up on the farm; that would be a true test of a farm paying.

1452. (*Mr. Elton.*) When you were speaking about those suggested amendments in the Agricultural Holdings Act you said that the landlord's consent had to be obtained and that he had to give it at his own risk. I did not quite catch what you meant by "at his own risk." That landlord's consent is needed for putting land into permanent pasture to be obtained as at present?—It has to be given to recover compensation.

1453. And you said something about its being at the landlord's risk?—No, I did not say that; I said the tenant's risk.

1454. That explains it. I did not catch what you said?—That is what I said.

State loans.

1455. It would have made that answer intelligible, and I only wish to make it plain. Then you suggested that the Board of Agriculture should be able to advance money for the purposes of accommodation buildings?—Yes, where they are not sufficient.

1456. And you mentioned the case where mortgages would not be convenient?—I did not really go into the question of the land where it was mortgaged; I was assuming for the time that there was no mortgage upon the land and that that would be a charge upon it.

1457. (*Chairman.*) I think that it was practically a loan by the Government?—Yes.

1458. (*Mr. Elton.*) You did not intend to go into the details as to the way in which the landlords would get the money?—No.

Fall in prices.

1459. (*Mr. Everett.*) I think you said that the fall of prices has been the principal cause of the state of agriculture now and 20 years ago?—That is so.

1460. And, in your opinion, were farmers as well as landlords better off out of the higher prices than they are now?—Yes, they were decidedly better off than now.

1461. Looking at those things, on the whole of Yorkshire, has the great fall in prices been a blessing or a curse?—It has been a curse to the tenant farmers and landlords.

1462. Do you think that it has been of a corresponding benefit to the industrial classes of the towns?—They have got their food cheaper; it is better for them.

1463. Have their industries been flourishing during those last few years?—I am not able to state what industries have been flourishing.

1464. You do not know whether there has been depression rather than prosperity?—I do not know.

1465. Either among the town classes or otherwise?—I do not look upon that as affecting agriculture.

Cause of fall in prices.

1466. What, in your view, is the cause of this great fall in prices?—The import of foreign food, and its supply exceeding the demand; that has brought down the prices.

1467. Are you aware that for more than a quarter of a century after free trade came in prices did not fall. When we had had 26 years of free trade the average of those past 26 years, I may tell you, was quite as high as it had been in the 30 years of protection?—That is very likely, but more countries are sending food than they did years ago.

1468. The only other question is this: you have spoken of certain things which might ameliorate the condition of the farmer, but in your view would not a rise in prices be a more thorough recovery of his past prosperous condition than any of those remedies?—Yes, higher prices would meet it.

1469. (*Captain Thomas.*) Have rents been regularly paid in your district?—I think so.

Distraints for rent.

1470. Have there been any distraints for rent?—Very few.

Changes of tenancy.

1471. Have the changes in tenancy exceeded the average of previous years?—I think not. There have not been so many during the last three or four years as there were six years ago.

Tenant's capital.

1472. What is the capital per acre that you consider necessary for a farm in your district?—From 7*l.* to 10*l.*; it depends upon the farm.

Railway rates.

1473. Do farmers complain of the railway rates being excessive?—There is not any complaint, I mean in particular, only we think they are high.

1474. Do they apply much artificial manure in your district?—Yes.

Co-operation.

1475. What is your reason against co-operation?—I simply say that it cuts off competition and puts the sale into the hands of large companies which I call syndicates and they dictate their own prices. Wherever there is competition there is lower prices.

1476. (*Mr. Channing.*) May I ask whether that is based on your experience in Yorkshire of any particular syndicate for providing manures and so on?—There are none in Yorkshire.

1477. There is a somewhat powerful organisation of that kind in the East Riding, a farmers' syndicate, for providing manures, is there not?—I have not heard of one.

Reductions in rent.

1478. Have the reductions in your district been much greater in the case of changes of tenancy than in the case of the old tenants applying for a reduction?—I do not think there has been any greater reduction when the changes have taken place. There are a great many cases where they have been given up for a reduction of rent in which the landlords have met the tenants and they have settled down again.

1479. But you do not think there is much difference?—I do not think there is. In the case of a few very backward farms in high situations where there is land that only some people will take, of course they are very difficult to let.

1480. Now about your own farms. May I ask whether they are as productive on the whole as they were twenty years ago?—We produce more.

1481. You have carried out freedom of cultivation very largely in your farms during that time?—The whole of them we have.

1482. And yet you find that the fertility has not been diminished?—It is very much higher than it was 20 years ago.

1483. You said that a tenant ought to have the compulsory right of laying down permanent pasture?—Yes.

Laying down permanent grass.

1484. I suppose by giving notice to the landlord?—No, he cannot give notice, there must be a consent.

1485. I know, you want to do away with the consent?—I want the landlord to lay it down.

1486. Is the only protection that you would give to the tenant who has laid down permanent pasture a recourse to the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes, I think that is enough; that would meet the case.

1487. Do you think that he would be able with the present machinery of the Agricultural Holdings Act to obtain compensation for laying down permanent pasture?—That would be fair compensation according to the Agricultural Holdings Act.

1488. But you are aware as to the inadequate compensation under the Act?—Well there are great complaints, but I think if the people would read the Act they would not complain so much about it.

Claims under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

1489. Are not you familiar with the complaints made in other parts of the country that, where claims presumably reasonable, are made by the farmers under the Agricultural Holdings Act, they are met by immense counter claims, damages for dilapidations, and so on; and farmers urge, I will not say whether rightly or wrongly, that they are elbowed out of their compensation?—I believe there is something there. I believe that is a very objectionable thing, and when a tenant makes a claim I do not think that the landlords receive it very favourably. They are more in favour of having some sort of compensation in their contracts or agreements and they do not receive it very favourably. I am not speaking of all, and they make very large counterclaims, ridiculous counterclaims, but in some cases they act as a terror to the tenant farmer. I believe there are some farmers who do not make their claims under the Agricultural Holdings Act in consequence of the landlord not receiving it in a proper manner. I would like further to say that I do not think the tenant farmers look upon these counterclaims as they did, because there have been instances where counterclaims for 800*l.* have been reduced to 100*l.* or 150*l.*, or where they have been 400*l.* they have been reduced to 60*l.*

1490. Were they reduced in court?—No, they were reduced when they came before the tenant-right valuers.

1491. Are you aware that a great many farmers are frightened to go into court?—The reference is to the valuer.

1492. Are the tenants not frightened by the fact of those counter-claims being used as a threat against them?—They were; I believe it is dying out.

Laying down permanent grass.

1493. This laying down of permanent pasture is a very costly improvement?—Yes, rather.

1494. Do you think a man would be a prudent and sensible man under the present condition of tenure, if he went to such a cost as that without some form of security of tenure either in the form of long leases or some other form of tenure?—I think so. My brother and I have laid two fields on the Bossall Farm to grass, and it has paid turning it from growing wheat to growing grass. Of course, we have had to do it very well with artificial manures, and it is paying us very much better than in arable.

1495. Of course it pays if you are allowed to go on and enjoy the advantages whether those are produced under a yearly tenancy or a lease?—It is fair to be compensated at the end of the tenancy.

Buildings.

1496. Do I understand you to say that you would give a compulsory right for the tenant to compel the landlord to erect the necessary buildings as well as drainage?—Yes. The tenant is suffering, he is under a very great disadvantage where he would like to keep stock, and has not convenience for that stock.

1497. You are aware that a proposal has been made before Parliament, I believe, in a Welsh Bill, that the tenant should have a right to serve a notice on the landlord that certain buildings are requisite, and if the landlord challenges that, he would have the recourse under the Agricultural Holdings Act, of challenging the claim of the tenant to the buildings; and if the challenge is unsuccessful, the tenant is to get the buildings. You approve of that, I understand?—Yes.

1498. (*Chairman.*) I thought the witness had said in answer to me that it was only to be with the consent of the landlord?—I think it must be. But there might be a provision where the landlord was so obstinate, that is hardly my experience, I believe landlords generally are anxious to meet their tenants as far as they can, and where a landlord cannot meet his tenant I do not think he would have any objection to going to the tenant to get that loan from the Government.

1499. (*Mr. Channing.*) You would have the Board of Agriculture to settle whether the building was desirable or not?—Yes.

1500. You would not allow the tenant to impose a perfectly useless building on the landlord?—That is the difficulty. The Government should have some practical man in the first instance to see whether that building was necessary beforehand. If he was to go and put up a useless building, and more buildings than were required for the land, of course that would be objectionable. For instance, I take it that on our own farms we have almost twice as many buildings as would be requisite to the land farming under a different system, and if horses were not kept; very likely if we were to give the farms up there would be half of those buildings standing empty.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

1501. You referred to the Agricultural Holdings Act and the desirability of amending it. Is it practically much used in Yorkshire?—Yes, and it is coming more and more into use. There are a very great many estates in which they do the same thing as is done in Lord Wenlock's agreement where a tenant who wants compensation has to make out his claim under the Agricultural Holdings Act; this intimation is printed at the top of Lord Wenlock's agreement; and there are a great many similar agreements to that now on other estates.

Notice to quit.

1502. With regard to the notice required under the Agricultural Holdings Act. What do you say about that?—I think that could be dispensed with; I do not see what use that would be on the third part of the schedule. The claim is made and vouchers are produced to prove his claim, I think that is sufficient. The two months' notice in my opinion is a very useless clause in the Agricultural Holdings Act.

1503. As to the food used for horses, would you include the food consumed by the horses in the claim for compensation?—We do not allow it on horse corn. I do not think that that comes within the Act. I do think that might come in. I think that these horses which are fed that are on the farm, and are not going upon the roads, might fairly be compensated for the food consumed by them.

1504. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Would you include feeding stuff that is produced on the farm, in the category of unexhausted improvements?—No, I do not think so.

Condition of landlords and tenants compared.

1505. Who do you think have lost the most during the depressed state of agriculture in proportion to their capital, the tenants or the landlords?—I should think they have lost about equally. Of course, if a tenant loses his capital he is done, and the landlord has still his land left.

1506. You think the tenants have suffered really in proportion to their capital more than the landlords?—If a tenant has lost his capital he cannot go on, and the landlord has still his land.

1507. And a good many have lost their capital, have they not?—A good many.

1508. Do you think that tenants have paid their rents out of their capital?—Yes, for the last 20 years.

1509. Have they paid a large amount of rent out of their capital?—Yes.

1510. Are there many arrears of rent?—I could not speak of that; they are kept private. I know of a few which I would not care to speak about.

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1511. Would you attribute those arrears to the rent being fixed too high?—No, as I said before, I attribute it to lower prices and foreign competition. Low prices really. The rent has been reduced as I said before.

1512. Not enough?—I do not think it could be. Some other remedy was necessary, for the rent would not meet it.

1513. Are most of the farms in your neighbourhood let by tender?—Very few; it is an exception where there is one let by tender.

1514. Would you accept this as a definition of rent; the profit that is made after the farmer has been able to live and to pay the outgoings on the farm. Is that a fair definition of rent?—Yes; it depends how he does live.

1515. I mean live fairly?—There are some people who live on 1,000*l.* a year and some on 100*l.*

1516. I mean live in a fair way. Have rents been too high according to that standard?—In some instances the rent might be reduced, but I think all farmers will bear me out that the landlords generally, in Yorkshire, have met their tenants fairly.

1517. But not enough to meet the foreign competition?—Not enough, and I do not think they could do it.

Notice to quit.

1518. You said there were some tenants who had to leave on six months' notice?—Yes.

1519. I thought the Agricultural Holdings Act provided that they should have 12 months?—No, it never touches on contract at all.

1520. The law wants amending in that respect, then?—It has been amended. It was half a year, and now it is a year's notice, and that is by law. Supposing there were no contract, and the landlord wanted to get rid of the tenant, he would have to give a year's notice. They can now contract and agree upon any time, a month, or two, or three, or six months.

1521. Is that often done?—Yes.

1522. So tenants practically have to leave their farms?—There are many tenants in favour of six months' notice.

1523. My point is this: Have tenants to quit their farms at six months?—They have, if they consent to a six months' notice.

1524. Because the agreement is evaded under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I do not say that it is evaded.

1525. It is ousted or set aside?—I do not think so. The Agricultural Holdings Act says that where a half year's notice is necessary to determine a year's tenancy, a year's notice is now given.

1526. If they make an agreement contrary to that six months' notice they evade the Act?—The tenant can do as he chooses; it is open to him to make what arrangement he likes.

Land courts.

1527. You said that you were not in favour of land courts?—No, I am not at present, however.

1528. Do you think there has been a movement in that direction?—Not in Yorkshire; there has been, I know, in other counties.

1529. Do you think that such an authority as this: the county court judge, with two practical men as assessors, would fulfil the functions that you are talking of under the Board of Agriculture?—Yes, I think so.

1530. Do you think that would be a good court of appeal?—They would determine what I was speaking about, so far as the buildings are concerned. They would determine what was the proper thing.

1531. Do not you think that such a tribunal is very necessary for the settlement of disputes between landlords and tenants?—Well I would rather let them settle themselves for my own choice. I have three or four landlords, and I would rather settle with my landlord than let other people settle the matter for me.

1532. But all farmers are not in such a flourishing condition as you are. Do you think that some farmers might settle?—I believe there are some cases where it would be quite right.

1533. You think the land court would be quite right in some instances?—Yes, in some instances, I would not dispute that for a minute, but I think it is the last thing to resort to as Englishmen.

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Agricultural Holdings Act.

1534. Is not the expense attached to the arbitration connected with the Agricultural Holdings Act one of the chief drawbacks to its being used?—Not the expense. I do not think that it is any more expensive. I have made upwards of 90 valuations this year and I do not think that the charges have been more than they are under an ordinary contract of tenancy.

Compensation for improvements.

1535. Do you think this would be a fair thing, provided that a tenant came into his farm and whatever improvements added to the lettable value of that farm to another tenant that the landlord should be compelled to compensate that tenant to that extent?—You mean that at present the improvements which are made are paid for by the incoming to the outgoing tenant?

1536. No, I mean this; supposing that a tenant put up buildings and laid down permanent pasture or did anything which would permanently improve the farm, and increase the lettable value of the farm, do you not think that it is right that the landlord should be compelled to compensate the tenant?—Yes, he should be compelled.

1537. To pay the tenant for everything that adds to the lettable value of the land?—Yes.

1538. (*Chairman.*) Is that independent of whether the landlord gives his consent to the building or not?—I brought that out to show that the tenants had not capital to expend on it. Now you are coming upon another class of man who has the capital. If you came to that class of man who has the capital to expend there you would have to be cautious not to erect buildings more than necessary for the farm. Section 34 of the Act is, that in cases where a tenant can erect buildings at the end of a tenancy he has to give notice to the landlord that he is going to remove those buildings, and the landlord in that case, if it is necessary for his farm, can take them at a valuation, and if not the tenant can remove the buildings away from the farm.

1539. But would not that entail great loss to the tenant?—I think that is fair. That is another point altogether that I brought out. This is a case where the landlord had not got capital and the tenant had not got capital, and you are letting a tenant erect buildings on another estate, perhaps, which may be possibly for his own use, and quite worthless when he is gone.

1540. But I said improvements that would add to the lettable value of the estate?—That would have to be determined. That is a very fine point to determine. I do not know how you would treat the land.

1541. You would leave it to practical men?—Sometimes it is with difficulty the tenant gets his compensation.

1542. You think under the present law tenants do not get paid a fair compensation?—I have not seen it in buildings. I think he does get fair compensation. I have not come across many farms where the tenant has erected any buildings. In the case of where a tenant has erected buildings and is in a good condition he has generally got the landlord to erect all the buildings.

1543. Supposing he does not?—According to the Act he could erect buildings without the consent of the landlord.

Rates.

1544. (*Mr. Dalton.*) On the whole, the rural rates have not gone up in your district, have they?—They have not gone up.

1545. I think you said that the land pays to keep increased poor in the towns?—Yes, I did say that.

1546. Do you mean to say that the land in your district pays for the poor in any part excepting your own union?—Well, only in the towns.

1547. In the particular towns of your union?—In the Malton Union.

1548. Then your complaint is merely as between your own land and that particular town?—I am not making any complaint. I am bringing that out as an instance where the tenant farmer is paying more than the shopkeeper.

1549. In that particular union?—In that particular union. But my point was this, that our population has increased, and that population is fed by foreign produce, and that we are not only paying rates for our own produce but paying for the poor that are fed by the foreign produce imported.

1550. But I understand that this poor rate has not gone up at all, although your rateable value has gone down. You pay just the same poor rate as previously ?—Just about the same.

1551. And you have already got a very large contribution from the Government towards that ?—You would not look upon a small place like Malton, which is practically a small town in an agricultural district, where the poor rate has not increased as it has increased in larger towns.

1552. But in large towns the town pays for it itself—for its own poor ?—Not always. York is a fair city.

1553. You say that rates have not gone up ?—Not much.

Restrictions on sale.

1554. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You said, I think, that even in cases where the prohibition of restrictions for the sale of produce had been removed that some of your neighbours did not avail themselves of it ?—Not all of them. I did not say they had been removed; they are still under the same agreement; but the landlords have given that permission.

1555. But you have got the permission, or they had the permission, and yet they do not use it ?—They do not avail themselves of it.

1556. Why is that ?—I do not think they have got to see the benefit of it.

1557. They thought that the present system was the best ?—I believe the tenant farmers years ago were as much against selling produce from the farm as the landlord. Some of them see it in a different light at the present time.

1558. Some of them are changing their opinions ?—The landlords, too, are changing their opinions; they are coming down more to it.

1559. But still you know instances where, although they could have done it, they have not thought fit to do it ?—They have not done it, however.

1560. You said that if it was to be done by legislation you would suggest a clause in the Agricultural Holdings Act prohibiting restrictions on the sale of produce provided that material of equivalent manurial value was brought back in its place ?—I think there should be an equivalent for what is taken away.

1561. How would you give effect to that ? What would be your safeguards for the landlord that the material would be brought back ?—We should produce vouchers.

1562. Would they be in all cases sufficient ?—I think quite sufficient.

1563. That is what you should rely upon ?—I should rely upon them.

1564. Would you make the system universal or should there be exceptions ?—I would make it universal. It is not deteriorating the land when the manurial value is returned. That is my point.

1565–6. But great relaxations have already been made, and you said that the system of relaxations was generally breaking through the agreement; if that continues would that do away with any necessity for legislation ?—I cannot vouch for what is going to be. Practically I am only stating what has been done in the past.

1567. But now in view of the great relaxations that you say have already begun do you think that legislation is both necessary and desirable ?—In my opinion, in some instances, if farming were to become more profitable the landlord would again put the restrictions on. It is only a question, in a good many instances, of getting the rent from the tenant that they allow him to send the produce off.

1568. Have you known instances where relaxations have been asked for by a good man and have been refused ?—No, I do not. On some estates the tenant never attempts to sell the produce and he never goes and asks the landlord for such a thing; they never dare to do it.

Laying down of permanent grass.

1569. With regard to the laying down of permanent grass, what should you estimate the cost of that per acre ?—3*l.* per acre if the tenant has got the first crop after laying it down.

1570. (*Chairman.*) Is that the first cost or the ultimate cost ?—I contend that land wants fallowing in the first instance, and after the fallowing you sow the land down. The tenant could sow it with a crop, and after getting the value of the crop it would leave about 3*l.* per acre.

1571. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Would it be a wheat crop ?—Or it could be barley, which you like. I think it preferable to sow with a spring crop.

1572. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) How many years do you estimate that it would take before the grass reached its full value ?—I think it goes on increasing for 40 years. It just depends on the different lands. I have seen some land laid to permanent grass where they have got very good and thick in the course of six or seven years. On other lands they have been quite thin; and then, again, it is essential where land is laid down into grass that it should be well manured, and that makes a wide difference again. It all depends upon how it is dressed for the years it would be left to get into permanent good grass.

1573. On what principle would you recommend that compensation should be given ?—That should be determined by valuers.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

1574. On the tenant's outlay ?—What is not on the outlay is due to the capabilities of the soil, I think outlay must be the basis.

Counterclaims.

1575. I think you said that the fear of counterclaims under the Agricultural Holdings Act was dying out ?—Well, the fear of them is dying out.

1576. Where the Act has failed in giving compensation in consequence of those counterclaims has it not been alleged that it is very often the fault of the valuers rather than the fault of the provisions of this Act ?—No, I could not say that it is the fault of the valuers. It is the outgoing tenant who first must make the claim, and the valuer acts upon the claim made. I do not think that any valuer with good common sense would recommend a tenant to forego his claim for compensation.

1577. Are you aware of instances yourself where the counterclaims for damages have exceeded the legitimate claims for tenant right ?—Yes, in dozens of cases.

1578. Where it has been unfairly made ?—Yes, it has been reduced; I had one last year where there was an umpire provided by the Board of Agriculture, where the counterclaim was for about 500*l.*, and 60*l.* was awarded.

1579. (*Chairman.*) What was the claim for, was it for leaving the land in a bad condition ?—It was for so-called cross cropping, and dilapidation of fences, ditches, roads, and other things.

1580. Is bad farming one of the claims made for leaving the farm in a bad condition ?—Yes.

1581. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Are you of opinion that where a landlord has let on that condition some counterclaims are fair and legitimate ?—Yes.

1582. But there have been counterclaims upon which damages have been awarded in excess of the claim for tenant right which you think would be unfair ?—I have not seen that more has been allowed for the counterclaim than should be allowed.

1583. But you have seen counterclaims where the award has been to a greater extent than fair ?—No, the award has not been—I do not think so.

1584. What is the fault of the Act if the fear of the counterclaim is dying out ? If the awards are fair and legitimate I do not quite follow how the Act fails ?—I do not say that it does fail. I never said that for a minute. I said it was a fear. The claims were made in fear of a big counterclaim, it was ignorance really. It was not attributable to the Act. It was not the fault of the Act, but the ignorance of the people.

1585. Where the claims under the Act which would have given compensation have not been met, it is owing to the ignorance of the people ?—I think so.

Duty on foreign barley.

1586. As to your proposals with regard to beer, I understand that you propose that the duties should be put upon foreign barley ?—Yes.

1587. Have you ever considered to what extent ?—No, I have not.

1588. Do I understand you to say that there would be an advantage to most lands ?—To all lands I would say.

1589. To all lands ?—To all lands.

1590. I wanted to ask you one question about your own farm in regard to which you seem to have been

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particularly fortunate, the land is in very good heart, and very productive, I suppose?—It is in good heart. It is not first class land.

1591. But it is very much owing to the quality of stock you have upon it?—And the manure that is put on it, and the cake consumed upon it.

1592. And among those there are a great number of horses?—I call them extra stock on the farm.

1593. Might I ask you how many you have?—We have 107.

1594. And do a good business, I suppose?—Yes.

1595. That probably has helped you to some extent?—It has helped the farm somewhat.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

1596. You were asked a question about horse corn as compensation; I did not quite catch your answer. Do you think that it ought to be given for horses?—I think so, although the Agricultural Holdings Act says cattle, sheep, and pigs, and does not include horses. There is a fight in valuations sometimes as to oats and other corn that have been used to feed horses. Where horses that are kept upon the farm and not removed for months I do not see why compensation should not be given.

1597. Would not it be very difficult to draw the distinction for the horse used for the purpose you describe and the horse used for other purposes?—I do not think so.

1598. Is not it a very common objection by the principal valuers that that it would lead to abuse?—It tends to it.

1599. It tends to it?—It might. The question for our valuers to determine is what oats are consumed by the horses on the farm, and what by horses going on the road.

1600. You were asked whether you approved of certain provisions in a Welsh Bill which was introduced this session into Parliament. Are you acquainted with that Bill?—No.

1601. Then you would not pledge yourself to approve of any of its provisions?—No, I would not.

1602. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Would you as a practical man consider it at all possible to fix rents on the basis that before the tenant should live he should pay the expenses of his farm before paying his rent?—The accounts would have to be kept of what was made. That is a new idea altogether to me.

Horse breeding.

1603. What class of horses do you use?—Hackneys principally.

1604. Do you sell at all to Army remount buyers?—No, I do not.

1605. Do they come into your district?—I do not follow you.

1606. Do the Army remount buyers agree to buy from farmers direct?—I do not think so.

1607. Would it help them if that was carried out in the horse-breeding district?—I cannot tell what price they would give. If you would tell me the difference between the prices paid and what they would pay I might determine that.

1608. The top price allowed is 45*l.* for a horse between three and four years old?—I have not considered that.

Freedom of cropping and sale.

1609. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You have advocated that the farmers should have in their agreement more freedom of cropping and also more freedom of sale?—Yes.

1610. I suppose, as a practical farmer, you acknowledge the great value of farmyard manures as against artificial manures?—As against?

1611. If you farm with nothing but artificial manures, then you would have the farm run out?—I think it would take me a long time to go into that particular, but I could only say that I had a very bad field 14 years ago; I have been trying the experiment and no farmyard manure has been put on to that; it was completely artificially manured, and it has produced the best crops of any field I have, of the same quality of land; it has improved more than any other up to date.

1612. Do you tell the Commission that you think artificial manures are as good to produce crops as farmyard manures?—I think that artificial manure is a great help on the farm. I go so far as to tell the Commission that that can be done.

1613. Do you think you could farm without farmyard manure?—Yes, I think I could.

1614. To a profit?—To a profit.

1615. And leave the land in a productive state?—I would not say. I do not think it would be practicable for every farmer to sell everything off his land and only use artificial manures to keep the fertility up. It would not be at all practicable to do it.

Wages.

1616. (*Chairman.*) As regards wages, are you paying the same rate of wages as you did a few years ago?—How far would you go back?

1617. Ten years, say?—I do not think there is very much difference.

The witness withdrew.

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Mr. Edward Harbord Lushington called and examined.

1618. (*Chairman.*) You are treasurer of Guy's Hospital, are you not?—Yes.

1619. You were examined before the Duke of Richmond's Commission in 1880 with reference to the landed property which belongs to Guy's Hospital, which practically you manage?—That is so.

1620. I think you then stated that you have three considerable estates belonging to Guy's Hospital, in Herefordshire, Essex, and Lincolnshire?—Yes.

Rental before and since 1879.

1621. Would you state what was the rental before 1879—the years of depression?—Yes. Would you like to have each estate separately?

Herefordshire estates.

1622. Will you state the acreage and rent on those estates before 1879?—The acreage, beginning with Herefordshire, is 8,353, and the rent is 11,056*l.*

1623. Was that before 1879?—It was before 1879.

1624. What is the rental now?—7,741*l.*

Essex estate.

1625. And what is the acreage and rent of the Essex estate?—The acreage is 8,106; the rental in 1879 was 11,760*l.*, and it is now 6,206*l.*

Lincolnshire estate.

1626. And what is the Lincolnshire estate?—The acreage is 6,146; the rental in 1879 was 13,189*l.*, and it is now 8,704*l.*

Tithe.

1627. Was the tithe paid in 1879 by the tenants?—The tithe was paid by the tenants in 1879.

1628. And is now paid by the hospital?—The tenants still pay the tithes on the Herefordshire estate.

1629. But in the other two estates do they pay tithes?—It is paid by the governors in the other two estates.

1630. In comparing the two estates that ought to be deducted?—That ought to be deducted.

Management.

1631. How are those estates managed?—On each estate we have a resident agent. In Herefordshire we have Mr. Heywood. He does not live on our estate now, but he is a man of very great experience and knowledge, and has had charge of our estates for the last five or six years. In Lincolnshire we have Mr. Thorold, who has been upwards of 20 years our agent in Lincolnshire; and on the Essex estates we have Mr. Strutt, a brother of Lord Rayleigh, and he also manages Lord Rayleigh's estate. Part of these properties and Lord Rayleigh's properties march together—they are contiguous to each other.

Expenditure in improvements.

1632. Has there been a considerable expenditure during the last 12 years in improvements?—There has been considerable expenditure, but only half as much as there used to be. In my previous evidence before the Duke of Richmond's Commission I think I stated that the governors generally spent £2,000 a year on each of their estates. Since the great drop in our rents the governors now only spend £1,000 a year, or aim to keep it at that figure as closely as possible.

1633. Then you have not found it necessary to increase your expenditure owing to the depression, but rather the reverse?—Quite the reverse.

Reductions of rent.

1634. When did these reductions of rent begin?—These reductions of rent have been gradually going on since 1880. Perhaps I might state at the present date what the total amount of reductions is per cent. if it would be agreeable.

1635. Please let us have it?—On the Herefordshire estate there is a reduction of 30 per cent.; but the tithe is paid as usual, as I have already said, by the tenants. In the Lincolnshire estate there is a reduction of 38 per cent., and the tithe makes a still further reduction of 8 per cent., making a total reduction altogether of 46 per cent. In the Essex estate there is a total reduction of 47 per cent., the tithes now being paid by the landlord, and that makes a further reduction of 13 per cent., naking a total altogether of 60 per cent. to the loss of the governors. I may state that this very large reduction does not at the present moment represent what the governors have just been doing. The governors have just been compelled to sanction a temporary reduction on the Essex estate of very nearly one-sixth of the remaining portion of the rent left in their hands.

Abatements.

1636. Have there been during the period considerable abatements of rent from time to time besides the permanent reductions similar to that which you are making now with respect to Essex?—There is a temporary reduction of one-sixth per cent. of the remainder that is now paid to the governors.

1637. That is an abatement due to the special year?—Due to the special year.

1638. Have there been similar abatements from year to year in the Essex estate other than the permanent reductions?—To a moderate extent only. I could not tell you how much.

1639. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Could you give the average amount per acre as compared with what it was formerly in each case?—I have not worked it out, but I shall be happy to give it.

1640. I should like to see it in that form?—And what it comes to per acre?

1641. Yes.

Arrears of rent.

1642. (*Chairman.*) Have the arrears of rent increased?—The arrears of rent have not increased. They have increased since 1879 because we had no arrears. In 1878 and 1876 we had no arrears—every sixpence was paid up to the day; but arrears have occurred constantly since, which we have either to forego or take something less, and we have to deal with the cases as the circumstances seem to demand.

1643. (*Mr. Everett.*) Up to which year was it that you had no arrears?—We had no arrears down to 1878. We did not know what such a thing as an arrear was.

1644. (*Chairman.*) Can you state the amount of arrears now?—I should have to find that out. I could not quite say with any certainty unless it is in that printed statement of ours. We have got the rent roll so that I can tell you in two minutes. The Herefordshire arrears on Lady Day were 769*l.*; the Lincolnshire arrears were 2,688*l.*; and the Essex arrears were 858*l.* That was on Lady Day last. These have been collected, a good portion of them; they are not the arrears of this moment.

Reductions of rent.

1645. When did those solid reductions of rent—those permanent reductions of rent begin?—In 1881 and 1882; they began at that time; but at first the governors were disposed to give only temporary reductions, but we soon found out that that did not meet the circumstances of the case.

1646. When did you see that the permanent reductions were completed—they began in 1881 and 1882?—They were completed in the course of the next three or four years.

1647. Then I gather from the figures you have laid before me that the rent of the Herefordshire estate was very little under 1*l.* an acre; in the case of the Lincolnshire estate it is rather over 1*l.* an acre—in fact nearly 30*s.*; in the case of the Essex estate it is considerably under 1*l.* per acre—about 16*s.*?—It is 15*s.* or 16*s.*, that is so.

Changes of tenancy.

1648. Have you had many changes of tenancy during that time?—Not many; we have done our best to maintain our old tenants. We have met them in every way we possibly could, and in some cases, in Essex especially, when our old tenants left we had to take the land in hand ourselves.

1649. Had you many changes there, did many of the farmers give up?—Many of them gave up.

Land in hand in Essex.

1650. And have you the land in hand?—We have now, at this moment, about 1,500 acres in hand in Essex.

1651. (*Lord Vernon.*) Under what head is the land in hand?—I shall have to tell you the names of the farms.

1652. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Is the land in hand included in the rental?—We have a small rental upon it. Perhaps I might explain that. Mr. Strutt agreed to take the management of the farms for which we could find no tenants, and he was to receive no remuneration at all for such beyond his actual out-of-pocket expenses such as horse allowance and so forth, and he was to go on those terms until the land had made a small rent, and any sum in excess of that small rent, any profit, was to be divided between himself and the governors. For the first three or four years that he was in charge of those farms he received absolutely nothing, the land was in such a bad state after being given up by our old tenants that it was as much as he could do to bring the land round. Two or three years ago he received, I think, for two years a small sum, 200*l.*, 100*l.*, and 150*l.* on another occasion. Last year again he tells me, that is, the year 1892, there will be no margin of profit to be divided between himself and the governors. The accounts for those estates which are in hand are made out very carefully. We take the interest for the money advanced for the purchase of both dead stock and live stock, and this is valued every year. So much is written off the dead stock; and as to live stock a careful valuation is made of its probable worth. Then a small sum is charged against each of those farms for rent, and if any balance is over as I have just described it is divided between the governors and our agent.

1653. Is the rent charged near to the rents of the other farms?—It is considerably below, I think you will see.

1654. (*Lord Vernon.*) It is about the same?—It is a little below; we have lowered the other farms so much.

1655. (*Chairman.*) From this statement there appears to be five farms in hand in Essex at this moment with an acreage of 1,700?—About that.

1656. Has there ever been a larger amount of land in hand?—No, we are now at the highest amount we have ever had in hand.

1657. How long have these farms been in hand?—They have not all been in hand at the same time. They have been taken in hand as the tenants gave them up. We began first with two and then with three.

1658. When did the first two begin?—About six years ago.

1659. The condition has been improved I presume with the better farming of the agent?—Yes.

1660. But you have not been able to let them?—We have not been able to let them.

1661. Have you land in hand on the other two estates?—We have no land in hand on the other estates.

Reduction of rent.

1662. Is the effect of your reductions that you have been able to save the tenants, at all events, on those other two estates?—I think so; certainly so, we have been able to save them.

Changes of tenancy.

1663. Have there been any changes in the ordinary course not caused by failure of land?—A few, some because they were old tenants who died, and one or two others, because they said the farm would not pay, and we have been able to let them.

1664. At the same rent?—There have been further reductions, and there are very often temporary considerations. I think if you turn to one of our estates, I should mention the Herefordshire estate—Aconbury Court—I think you will see that is a farm which has changed hands more than any other.

1665. (*Lord Vernon.*) That must be very bad land?—It is not very good land. The fact is that part of the farm is on the slope of the hill and it is rather difficult to plough, and it involves a larger number of horses than one would have on a level farm so to speak. It is not good land and there is a good bit of wood upon it.

1666. (*Chairman.*) You said that that farm has changed hands often?—More often than any other.

1667. But you would not be able to let it?—No. We have helped the man to get some dairy produce off the farm which he could not do, and we have gone to some expense in fitting up cowsheds and bringing water into the farm yard.

Agreements,

1668. Do you give leases? — They are all yearly agreements.

1669. Have you been ready to give leases?—Well; the governors have no wish to give a lease. For some years past those who had leases were allowed to run out, and if they wished to renew their tenancy they renewed it on a yearly agreement.

1670. What was the reason of that?—The governors thought it a more preferable arrangement.

1671. Did the tenants wish to have leases or not?—I do not think that the tenants wished to have leases, but the real fact is, if I may say so, our tenants have always considered themselves as next door to permanent occupiers of the soil. Many of them have been there, and their fathers and grandfathers have been tenants before them. Old Mr. Phillpotts in Herefordshire has been our tenant, he and his family for over 100 years.

Sporting rights.

1672. Do they have the game? — They have the game.

1673. Do they generally let the game themselves, or do they keep it?—They keep it in their own hands.

Essex estate.

1674. Of the three estates the Essex is far the worst?—Incomparably so.

1675. The reductions have been heavier?—Yes.

1676. A considerable portion is in hand and you find it difficult to get fresh tenants?—We find it quite impossible.

1677. What is the condition of that land, what kind of land is it?—Very heavy clay. It is good wheat land as a general rule, but fit for very little else.

1678. Then the low price of wheat as compared with other produce—the very low price has told exceptionally upon that land?—Certainly.

Lincolnshire estate.

1679. Then with regard to the Lincolnshire estate, what about that?—That is a wheat country generally. I think I might explain that our three estates are composed greatly of wheat land, and I attribute it to the circumstance that when these estates were purchased by the governors, 150 years ago, or rather more, I think they thought it was advisable to buy land which grew wheat. Everybody wanted bread and corn, so that they invested their property in wheat-growing land.

1680. Were they bound to invest their property in land?—They were, in land under the Act of their incorporation.

Price of wheat.

1681. And at that time the price of wheat was high and very likely to continue?—Yes.

1682. (*Mr. Everett.*) It was not high then?—Was it not?

1683. (*Mr. Giffen.*) What was the price of wheat 150 years ago, not much higher than it is now, was it?—It would represent far more money.

1684. In some respects, but as an actual! question of money I should doubt whether it was much higher than it is now?—Quite so.

1685. (*Chairman.*) Have you any figures in your office for a longer period before the rise took place?—Certainly.

1686. Can you state the figures?—I do not think that we have brought any figures, but we have the rentals from the foundation of the hospital.

1687. I think it would be very interesting to have those?—I shall be very happy to give them. (*See* Appendix A., IX. 1, IX. 2, and IX. 3.)

1688. The properties have remained the same?—There has been some little interchange here and there; and we have added on to the estate from time to time, but the nucleus of the estates is the same.

1689. And you probably could tell us how much per acre the land was for the last 50 years?—Certainly.

Expenditure on improvements.

1690. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Would you add a statement of the expenditure on improvements at the same time, and the reductions compared with improvements?—We shall be happy to do that. With regard to the improvements I should like to mention this: I said just now that in former days we spent 2,000*l.* a year on each estate. That was made up of expenditure which the governors sanctioned, and thought absolutely necessary for the benefit of the farming, and it also included any expenditure that a tenant particularly wished should be done for his benefit, and for which he was prepared to pay 5 per cent. additional rent.

1691. And now the expenditure is less?—Now the expenditure is reduced to 1,000*l.*, but of course if we could act within that limit we should be happy to give any tenant any improvement that he desired on his property on the same conditions as we have hitherto done, namely, that we would find the money, provided that we had the money to do so, and he would pay 5 per cent. on the outlay.

1692. The point is whether you could find the net sum the hospital receives from each estate as distinguished from the gross rent?—Exactly, we shall have no difficulty in showing that.

1693. (*Chairman.*) Looking generally through the list of farms, they occur to me to be rather large farms?—Yes, they are.

Size of farms.

1694. And there are comparatively few small farm holdings?—There are very few farms of less than 100 acres.

Large and small farms.

1695. Have you found any difference between the large farms and the small ones. You have greater reductions in the large than in the small ones. Can you form any idea?—In Essex we have had to give greater reductions in the small farms, I think you will see if you look at the Essex estate, that on the Beaumont estate there is a large farm there of 733 acres. We used to receive 1,128*l.* We have only had to reduce that by about 250*l*

1696. (*Chairman.*) It is now 850*l.* a year?—Yes.

1697. The reduction there is not so large as in many of the others?—That is what I wish to bring forward as an instance; it is the largest farm.

1698. (*Mr. Lambert.*) But probably it is the best land?—It is fairly good land. The whole of the Beaumont estate is better than Leigh's Priory estate, and the other two estates in Essex.

1699. (*Chairman.*) Then take the Herefordshire and Lincolnshire, do you find that the smaller farms have done better than the larger ones?—No, certainly not, I should think.

Sub-division of farms.

1700. You have not tried to break up any of the large farms?—We felt that we should be involved in such an expenditure in building cow sheds and barns and homesteads, that we did not attempt it.

Reduction of rent.

1701. What do you consider the prospects of the immediate future? Take the two estates Herefordshire and Lincolnshire, do you consider that the reductions have been such that the rent may now be maintained at present prices?—I should be afraid not. I think you have a daily increasing importation of foreign produce, and I believe that this year there is a larger quantity of wheat coming from Russia than has ever come before.

1702. But I am assuming that the present prices are maintained?—If present prices are maintained, then I hope we shall be able to go on.

1703. Then in the case of Essex, you have not got to the end of your difficulties?—I think so. I do not anticipate that we shall have to make those present large temporary reductions permanent.

1704. Exactly, but you doubt whether you would be compelled to make that temporary reduction a permanent one?—I do not think that we should have to make it permanent in an ordinary year, but I look upon last year just over—1892—as a most disastrous year for farmers for the yield was so bad.

1705. That is to say, the 1892 year?—The 1879 and 1892 were two very bad years indeed.

1706. Has not 1893 been equally bad almost for wheat?—Yes, it has been very bad for wheat, but not so very bad altogether in other things.

Price of wheat.

1707. But the prices and quantity of wheat, and the grain per acre, has been very low?—Very low indeed. We take our year from March to March, and I was including 1892 and 1893; our accounts have not been made out to the present time.

1708. But the harvest of 1893 has been bad, has it not?—The harvest of 1893 has been very bad indeed.

1709. Therefore you have had two very bad years in succession?—Yes.

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1710. But assuming that the produce goes back to the average before 1892, and the present prices are maintained, should you estimate having to make further reductions?—I certainly think we should not have to make further reductions, but should be able to hold our own.

Large and small farms.

1711. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) I notice on the Herefordshire estate you have some small holdings; could you say whether the smaller have done better than the larger?—I think they have done worse. We have had more difficulties with our poorer tenants than with our richer tenants with larger holdings.

1712. Are any of your tenants in Herefordshire hop growers?—Yes, I can give you an account.

Hop growers.

1713. Have they been better off than other farmers?—The total quantity of hop growers is represented by 90 acres only. It is quite a small sum, but I think on the whole I should not say that they had been very successful.

Fruit farmers.

1714. Would the same apply to orchards?—No, orchards as a general rule are a more steady crop every year than the hops are.

1715. The tenants of orchards have done better than other tenants?—Almost all our tenants have got some little holding in orchards.

1716. That is a small help to them?—Yes.

Market gardens.

1717. In Essex have you any market gardens?—None at all. I should like to mention in reference to that question of market garden land that our land is very inconveniently situated for the conveyance of produce to either of the large towns or to the capital.

1718. Therefore it is not suitable for market gardening?—It is not suitable for market gardening.

Freedom of cultivation.

1719. Do your tenants have freedom of cultivation; may they cultivate exactly as they like?—Our agreements contain the old rule of a four-course system. If any tenant wishes to set that aside, and gives our agent reasonable ground for so doing, we do not attempt to bind him down to it.

1720. Does the same apply to selling their hay and straw from the farm?—Yes, we have constantly allowed a certain quantity of hay and straw to be sold off, provided its place was supplied with artificial manure.

Import of wheat.

1721. (*Mr. Giffen.*) With reference to the large importation of wheat from Russia lately, can you tell us whether the trade in wheat is considered in Russia to be remunerative to the agriculturist, or whether it is not the case that the Government have to take special measures to support agriculture?—I am afraid I could not answer that question.

1722. Of course importation of wheat fluctuates very much from place to place annually, and it is not always Russia which sends its surplus?—It is not. But on that point I should like to say that I know something about India, and I expect that for many years to come we shall have enormous supplies of wheat from India, because at present we have only land in cultivation adjoining the main channels of communication by railways, and year by year, as we shall have added lateral communications to those railways, they will bring more and more wheat down to the great export towns like Bombay.

1723. But you cannot speak as to what the position of Russia was?—No, I cannot.

1724. About the position of the United States, can you speak of that?—Not with any reliable information. I have heard something about it, but personally I know nothing about it.

1725. The point is how far the depression of agriculture is general, how far the competitors are much in the same boat as the English agriculturists themselves. Can you give us any information about that fact?—I can scarcely say. I have no information that will be worthy of your acceptance.

Rural depopulation.

1726. Can you tell us whether the number of agricultural labourers on your estate has been diminished in the last 10 or 15 years?—There is a slight diminution of the agricultural population.

1727. But you could not say how much precisely?—No.

1728. Can you say whether wages have been increasing or diminishing during the last 10 years?—They have diminished in Essex certainly.

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1729. How much?—They have diminished to from 10*s*. to 12*s*. per week in many parts.

Wages.

1730. (*Mr. Clay.*) Has your able-bodied man no more than 10*s*. a week to live upon?—Well, they have certain advantages you know in a cottage found for them, and milk and vegetables and things of that kind.

1731. What do you put that at per week?—I suppose it is worth 3*s*. or 4*s*. per week more.

1732. Would you say what is the cause of wages diminishing, is it the bad trade that has created less demand for the labourers?—The farmers say that they cannot afford to pay the old rate of wages; they do not make profit enough, and naturally enough they try to cut down their labourers to a minimum.

1733. Is that a sound policy?—I should say so far it is a sound policy, if they could get the same work for 10*s*. that they could get for 14*s*.

1734. Do they get the same work as they did out of the labourer?—I do not hear of any alteration of the hours of labour or amount of labour performed by a man in the present day.

1735. Would it not be of more advantage to let down the rents, and allow the farmers to pay the labourers better?—I think if you look at the figures you will see that the Governors have gone as far as they could well go.

1736. Still they might go a little further because this 10*s*. per week is a miserable wage?—Could we be sure that the money would go to the labourers? I am afraid not.

1737. Where would it go?—I should say it would stay in the farmers' pockets.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

1738. Are your tenants under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes, they are under the Act.

1739. And do you pay any compensation under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Whenever there is a question of a tenant leaving we always have arranged when the question of compensation arose, to settle it without any trouble at all. We have never had any differences, and never had any occasion to call the law in.

1740. I think, in answer to a question put by Mr. Howard on the Duke of Richmond's Commission, you said that you had some difficulty under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—That was before the change in the Agricultural Holdings Act. They all hold their farms under that Act since then. We have been forced into the Act; I think I am right in saying that.

1741. Then I also see in your evidence before the Duke of Richmond's Commission you talked about a farm in Sutton Bridge being a very fine farm and being in a very bad state. How is that now?—I do not think that is quite right. I think I mentioned that there was some land in the neighbourhood of Sutton Bridge which we had been enclosing some years ago, and we hoped that it would turn out very productive; but, unfortunately, the sea found its way inside and destroyed the land. I think that was, perhaps, the point you were referring to in connexion with Sutton Bridge.

1742. Is your land's fertility increasing or decreasing; I mean, is it going out of condition?—In Lincolnshire generally, do you mean?

1743. Yes?—I think that it is in very good condition; I do not think it has gone out of fertility.

Freedom of sale.

1744. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) What equivalent do you insist upon the tenants returning who sell the produce off their holdings? Is it upon a money basis or upon a manurial value basis?—I am not quite sure that I could tell you that. That is a matter that is generally left in the hands of the agent to settle with each individual farmer, but I believe I am correct in saying that it is on a manurial basis.

Imports of wheat.

1745. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do I understand you rightly to say that you attribute a great part of the falling price of wheat to the large quantity of wheat which is imported from India?—Yes.

1746. And you anticipate still larger exports in the future?—Yes, for the reasons I stated.

1747. I am afraid I did not follow them?—The reasons were that several new lateral communications are being yearly made, bringing parts of the country into immediate communication with the great lines of railway, and so bringing down wheat to the ports to which heretofore it could not be brought down.

Mr. E. H. Lushington.

23 Nov. 1893.

Effect of fall in price of silver.

1748. Have you given any attention to the question of the effect of the fall in the price of silver upon the gold prices of wheat in this country?—I have not followed it very closely, but I have no doubt, I may say, that the fall in the price of silver will affect, if it continues, the exportation of wheat from India.

1749. You have not studied the question?—No; but that is my opinion.

Reduction of rents on large and small farms.

1750. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Can you account at all for the fact that there has been a greater fall in the rents of smaller farms than of the larger ones?—I think I can to this extent. I think that previous to the commencement of the depression farms were in great demand. These men were ready to take them almost at any price. The smaller tenants were pushed to find payment when the bad seasons in 1879 set in, and they were spending more than they got, and they went to the banks and they borrowed money for a little time; but, of course, the banks pressed them for the money, and they became bankrupt, and left their farms and went away.

Fixing of rents.

1751. (*Mr. Lambert.*) How are your rents fixed?—The agent used to recommend to the treasurer for the time being what he thought was the proper rent to ask for such a farm, and the treasurer considered the matter, and if he thought the agent had produced good reasons for demanding a larger rent, it was raised.

1752. Were the rents fixed by you or practically by open competition?—They were not fixed by me, it was before my time, 20 years ago, but there was a great deal of competition at that time. Whenever a farm became vacant there probably were three or four farmers who would come down from Essex to the country house and wait to have their chance of bidding something more than somebody else.

Fixity of tenure.

1753. That was done often?—That was done often.

1754. Do you attach great importance to fixity or practical fixity of tenure?—I do certainly.

Freedom of cultivation.

1755. And to the practical freedom of cultivation?—Yes.

Shooting rights.

1756. And have your tenants all the shooting rights?—They have the shooting rights.

Agents.

1757. (*Captain Thomas.*) Are the agents you employ practical agriculturists?—They are practical agriculturists, I should say, certainly; at least two out of three, and I should say the third is also a practical agriculturist. Mr. Strutt has farmed himself and has had great experience. He was brought up as a farmer. Mr. Thorold in Lincolnshire has certainly been engaged in agriculture for nearly all his life; and Mr. Heywood is well known in the West of England as one of the most experienced men connected with farming interests, although I do not think he farms himself—at least I know he has none of our farms.

Mr. E. H. Lushington.

23 Nov. 1893.

Labourers' cottages.

1758. Are there any labourers' cottages on these estates?—Yes, there are, and from time to time we have added to them.

1759. Do the labourers rent them from you or from the farmers?—The farmers, I think, as a general rule, rent them from us.

1760. The farmer rents them from you and re-lets them to the labourers?—It is necessary to do so because he puts people in the cottages who are connected with the farms.

1761. Is any land attached to those cottages?—A little bit; I could not say how much.

1762. Sufficient to keep a cow?—Certainly not; but sufficient to give the tenants a few vegetables and that sort of thing.

Indian wheat.

1763. (*Mr. Everett.*) You were speaking of the importation of wheat from India. Are you aware that the difference in the exchangeable value of silver and gold enables them to lay down their wheat here at a much lower price than they used to, while receiving the same price in their own money?—I cannot say.

1764. (*Chairman.*) Do you know anything about the question?—It is not a question that I know anything about.

Agents.

1765. (*Lord Vernon.*) How are your agents paid; are they given a commission?—I think I have described how Mr. Strutt was paid, the Essex agent; he gets half when there is anything to divide.

1766. That is what you said about the farms in hand, but the other agents, are they paid on commission?—No, Mr. Throld has 500*l.* a year and a house, and Mr. Heywood has 350*l.* a year.

1767. I only wanted to know the way in which they were paid, not the amount?—That is how they are paid.

Conditions of agreements.

1768. (*Chairman.*) Have the conditions been relaxed?—The conditions are relaxed.

1769. Only pending this depression or generally?—We should not have refused any further relaxation of the conditions before the depression set in, if there seemed reasonable grounds for it.

1770. The agreements still contain the conditions?—The agreements still contain the conditions. I shall furnish those papers that I have been asked for.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. J. Cocks.

Mr. JOHN COCKS called and examined.

Mr. J. Cocks.

1771. (*Chairman.*) You are a farmer residing at Ernsettle, King's Tamerton, Plymouth, are you not?—Yes.

1772. How far are you from Plymouth?—About five miles.

1773. And you represent the Devon and Cornwall Chamber of Agriculture?—I do.

1774. Have you been nominated by them to come and give evidence?—I have.

1775. You and your two sons farm from 900 to 1,000 acres, do you not?—We do.

1776. Are they more than one farm?—We have three farms; I have one and my sons have one each.

1777. Whom do you hold under?—One of my sons is under Mr. Cory, of Langdon Court, in Wembury parish, and the other is under Mr. Marshall, of Liskeard.

1778. How long have you held those farms?—One has been held for three or four years, and the other about eight years.

1779. And the third farm?—I happen to be the unfortunate owner of the third.

Size of farm.

1780. What is the size of that farm?—About 200 acres, hardly 200 acres.

1781. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What is the size of the other farms?—One is 350 acres and the other 340 acres.

1782. And one is your own farm?—The one I occupy is my own.

1783. And that is how much?—About 180 acres, nearly 200 acres. Then I rent under two landlords besides that, occupying a small portion of land.

1784. (*Chairman.*) Are these additions to the farm?—Yes, grass pieces.

1785. One of your sons came in about three years ago?—About three or four years ago, and the other son about eight years ago.

1786. They have come in since the depression?—It had begun before that a little.

Rent.

1787. What is the rent that they pay for those two farms?—One pays 330*l.* a year for 340 acres, and the other pays 575*l.* a year for 350 acres with 10 per cent. reduction the last two years.

1788. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What is your own farm?—My own farm is between 170 and 180.

1789. (*Chairman.*) What is the 575*l.* a year for?—The 575*l.* a year is for the 350 acres.

1790. Is that the one for eight years?—No, for four years.

1791. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What is the rent of the 350-acre farm?—It is 575*l.* a year.

1792. (*Chairman.*) Are they near where you reside?—No, they are not. I am about five miles to the north of Plymouth, and my sons are about five miles to the south of Plymouth; Plymouth is about midway between us.

1793. Is the rent of the farm that is 575*l.* a year a high one?—It is a high one.

1794. Is it a valuable farm?—A very useful farm.

1795. And your son took it four years ago?—Yes, about four years ago.

1796. (*Lord Vernon.*) You get a 10 per cent. reduction?—Yes.

Characteristics of farms.

1797. When was that made?—Two years ago, I think.

1798. Will you describe the condition of those three farms?—Yes, they are mixed farms, both corn and cattle. I have taken the 340-acre farm as being the largest that was taken 8 or 10 years ago, to show the depreciation in value since it was taken, up to this moment if it would interest you.

Price of wool.

1799. Yes?—It is a mixed farm keeping about 150 ewes, and it grows about 20 pack of wool in the year. When I took it about eight or nine years ago—I cannot tell the exact price—but I should think wool was 9*d.* or 10*d.* per lb.; but on my farm that I have been farming myself nearly 30 years I know the average of the wool would be 1*s.* all the time, and I have been farming up to eight years ago.

1800. (*Mr. Lambert.*) It is unwashed wool, is it not?—It is unwashed wool. Now at this present moment wool with us is worth 6½*d.* per lb. I have put down 20 pack of wool for each year at 5*d.* per lb. minus, in the returns of the farm—that I think will amount to about 100*l.* on my son's wool.

1801. (*Chairman.*) Is that a reduction from 9*d.* or 10*d.* to 6½*d.* per lb.?—No, I do not put it at 1*s.*; it is put down at 11*d.*—I put it at 5*d.* and 11*d.*—in 6½*d.* and 5*d.* I think I have allowed a fair margin. That would be 5*d.* per lb. loss to what it was formerly and it should be a living price.

1802. What was the price of wool on the 350-acre farm?—About 9*d.* or 10*d.* per lb. I am not quite sure to a penny per lb., but, as I have said, mine has never averaged less than 1*s.*, but then I have made as much as 14*d.* and 16*d.* per lb.

1803. In the case of sheep what do you say?—My son has 150 sheep and 150 ewes, that would mean something like 400 sheep on the farm; but I consider that this is a fair average, if a person can get as many lambs as he has got ewes therefore he would have 150 sheep to sell every year.

Price of sheep.

1804. (*Mr. Everett.*) What breed are they?—What we call the South Hants long wool sheep. They would be depreciated in value in these eight years. I have put it down at 12*s.* per head; but that does not cover it.

1805. Then you take the present prices as compared with what they were a few years ago?—I think the depreciation is 12*s.* per head from what it was within the eight years.

1806. What do you put the price at now?—About 30*s.* per head. If you put the figures together you would make it rather a strong stock for the number of acres; therefore he does not sell them as fed sheep but as breeding ewes. I have put it down at 12*s.* per head, and then at 32*s.* a piece or something like that that would amount to 90*l.* Then, again, he kept about 60 or 70 beasts—he rears them all, and he keeps about 20 beasts, perhaps, or perhaps two or three more. Of course there is always a loss, and if he sells sows 20*l.* a year that is as much as he can expect to sell, and then I consider for them the depreciation is something like 4*l.* each from eight years ago up to the present time.

1807. When did that depreciation begin?—About three years they have been going back—three or four years—something like that.

Price of wheat.

1808. Then with regard to wheat, what do you say?—He grows about 20 acres a year; it is a fair wheat, corn-growing farm, and I calculate that he gets 30 bushels—or 15 of our bags—15 bags an acre.

1809. (*Mr. Lambert.*) That is 62 lbs. each?—62 lbs. each. I am not quite sure but about eight or nine years ago I fancy that wheat was 11*s.* per bag. I am not quite sure whether it was or not. But I am well aware of this, that wheat cannot be grown for less. It is now sold for 7*s.* per bag, and I consider that there is 4*s.* a bag depreciation there and that would amount to 60*l.*

1810. The bag is two bushels?—Yes, 62 lbs. is the bushel in Devonshire. I have said nothing about barley, because I do not think that barley should be treated as it is. Barley seems to be the best grain that is selling. I have added all these figures together and I have found that all the rent is gone, and the 330*l.* I think you will find if you add them together, will be the rent of the farm.

1811. (*Chairman.*) Does your son hold under lease?—He holds under a lease, which I shall further on say something about.

Reduction of rent.

1812. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What is the total reduction?—What we say in our neighbourhood is that you should hear the evidence which is to be brought before you. I do not think that we have anything at all like an average of 10 per cent. reduction in rent, not taking the average. We have two or three very good gentlemen about us. We have the Duke of Bedford, for instance; I believe he has allowed 25 per cent. or something like that. We have other good men—Lord Morley, I believe, allows 15 per cent.; then we have the Earl of Mount-Edgcumbe, he allows 10 per cent. I am told. Lord St. German's allows from 10 to 15 per cent.

1813. (*Chairman.*) When you speak of allowances, do you mean that abatements have been made during the current year or are they permanent reductions?—I do not think they are permanent reductions, they are only temporary.

1814. Just for the present year or for each year?—I think it has been for two or three years. I am not a tenant, but I am speaking of what I hear from our neighbours.

1815. It has not yet assumed a permanent form?—I do not think so. I do not think that has taken place in our neighbourhood.

1816. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) But on this farm of your own of which you are speaking, has there been any return?—There has.

1817. (*Chairman.*) You are now dealing with the tenancies, are you not?—I am dealing with the rented farms.

1818. When was that reduction first made?—Three years ago.

1819. And not since?—No extra per-centage since.

1820. And that is made on a farm held under lease?—Yes, on a farm held under lease.

1821. What is the length of the lease?—21 years. I had very great faith seven or eight years ago that we were going to see better times.

1822. And you advised your son to take advantage of it?—I did. I am sorry to say that I have to pay the rent of it.

1823. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What was the date of your son taking the farm?—About eight years since. I am not sure to a year, but from seven to nine years.

1824. (*Chairman.*) Had there been a considerable reduction in the rent of that farm as compared with previous years?—I think it is about 50*l.* a year less than it was before.

1825. Not a very considerable reduction?—No, 50*l.*

1826. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You made a bargain at the time?—Yes.

1827. And you thought it was a fair rent at the time?—I did.

1828. (*Chairman.*) Were prices low then?—Not so very low then. I do not think they were eight or nine years ago. I am not prepared to say what they were. I am quite sure that sheep and bullocks were a good price.

1829. Has your son applied for a reduction?—He has, I think, applied.

1830. I suppose that the answer that he gets is, "You hold under a lease"?—That is all. I have also asked him to let me relinquish and give it up, but to no purpose.

1831. Is your son ready to give it up?—It is I who would be most ready to give it up. You cannot have a shirt off a naked man, and you would not like to see your son go down.

1832. It is practically your farm then?—That is just about it; still he has a very good landlord. He is a very nice fellow to meet, and all that sort of thing.

1833. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Except that he does not stump up the cash?—He is a very nice jovial fellow. I am inclined to think that he would be better but for the others about him—I mean his neighbours. We have got many worse cases than this.

1834. (*Chairman.*) Before we go further into that matter, will you state what your other son farms; does he hold under a lease?—No; he is a yearly tenant.

1835. Has he found the same difficulties, or not?—He got 10 per cent. back.

1836. He came in only four years ago?—Only four years ago.

1837. Had prices been much lowered then as compared with previous prices?—They were lowering four years ago, and things looked very dark; but still it has got worse since.

1838. But in spite of it he took this farm of 350 acres at 575*l.* a year?—He did.

1839. That seems rather a high rent?—Yes.

1840. Is there anything special about that farm which accounts for the rent?—He takes advantage of the town; he has a good bit of grass land and takes rather an advantage of the town.

Characteristics of farms.

1841. (*Lord Vernon.*) Of these two farms one is five miles south of Plymouth; where is the other one?—It would be ten miles from Plymouth, St. Stephen's, Saltash.

1842. It is because the farm is nearer the town that it is a higher rent?—Yes, and it is a good bit better land.

1843. (*Chairman.*) What is the character of this farm?—It is a good sheep and beast farm also.

1844. (*Mr. Everett.*) What proportion of grass is there?—I think about 150 acres of grass out of those 350 acres.

1845. How was the other farm in that respect, the 340-acre farm?—I do not think it is worth mentioning, perhaps 10 acres of grass.

Wages.

1846. (*Chairman.*) With regard to wages, what has happened to them?—Our wages are very high with us, they have increased.

1847. Since when?—They have been gradually going up the last two or three years, that is to get anything like an efficient man.

1848. Is there a difficulty in getting efficient men?—There is a difficulty in getting efficient men; we can get plenty of labourers, but in getting efficient men there is great difficulty.

1849. (*Mr. Everett.*) What is the rate of wages?—We pay 15*s.* per week with a cottage and garden.

1850. You mean besides the 15*s*?—Yes, and milk for the family.

1851. (*Chairman.*) I think you said your son on the 330*l.* a year farm would be willing to give up his lease, or rather that you would be willing to give up for him?—I would.

1852. In the case of the other farm of 350 acres which lets for 570*l.* it is held on a yearly tenancy, is it not?—Yes.

1853. And your son is not able to hold it?—He is holding it hoping that the times will be better; but I do not see much hopes of that, and more than that he has a specially good landlord who is always doing everything that he asks for.

1854. Has he asked for a large reduction of rent?—He does not seem to see that, though.

1855. Then I suppose your son has asked for it?—No doubt about it.

Characteristics of farm.

1856. He has not yet thought it expedient to give it up?—No, he has to do something for his living in order to live.

1857. Now let us come to your own farm. I think you said you were the unfortunate owner?—That is so.

1858. What is your experience there?—I suppose my farm is rather in a better position than many others; it is chiefly grass.

1859. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) And near a market?—About 4½ miles from a market, but I keep a dairy on it.

1860. (*Chairman.*) Do you supply Plymouth with milk?—Devonport rather.

1861. Is that your main return?—It is the main return. I do not grow wheat, and the corn that I grow is consumed on the farm. I consume all that I grow.

Price of milk.

1862. What has been your experience of prices there in the milk produce?—I do not think that it has gone up in price, it remains just stationary. There is a very much larger consumption, but it is this way: when people get a little poverty-stricken they then begin to get a few cows and consequently the supply is greater. The consumption is greater as well as the supply being greater. I do not think there has been very much change in prices for two or three years.

1863. You are comparing it somewhat with a farther time back?—There was a great scarcity, but I do not think there is a great deal of difference in the price of milk for the last seven years.

Cost of labour.

1864. In what respect have you been unfortunate on this farm?—Well, there is the labour question, labour costing more than it used to do.

1865. But apart from that the conditions are not worse than they were?—I do not think very much.

Rates and taxes.

1866. Then labour has gone up?—Yes, and our rates and taxes have gone up also.

1867. Are you in an urban district?—Yes, and a rural district.

1868. Do you pay a larger amount in the pound than you did?—We do.

1869. What has it risen to?—We are paying now, I do not know whether it is 3*s.* but it is 2*s.* 8*d.* in the pound. I do not think it is quite 3*s.* in the pound.

1870. What was it three years ago?—I remember when it was about half that, many years ago.

1871. I mean comparing it with eight years ago?—I think about 1*s.* in the pound.

1872. What is that due to?—It is due to the sanitary matters. We have got all that put on us; and our roads cost us more than they formerly did. I do not think that that is any waste of money, because I think a good road is a paying matter, but sanitary matters are becoming a very great consideration in our neighbourhood, and the school board also.

1873. Has your assessment been maintained at the full amount?—Yes.

1874. Has there been no reduction?—No, none. When I say "none" I should say not generally. There are a few exceptions. Our union consists of 22 parishes, perhaps some of the outlying parishes have had some reduction, and when that is made known to the Assessment Committee they have been reduced, but not as a general rule.

1875. Where the rent has been reduced the assessment has been reduced?—Yes, it has.

1876. Has there been a general reduction of rents in the neighbourhood?—Not very great.

Rents.

1877. But still there has been some reduction?—Not generally. There are many gentlemen I could name. I rent some land under a gentleman at a very high rent. When I spoke to his steward about a reduction, he said, "I suppose you are really joking; you do not "want really any reduction. I suppose they have set "you first on the list and the rest to follow." I said to him, "Would you take the land off my hands?" but he said, "No."

1878. That is your own farm?—It is not a farm, but it is some over land which I have been renting for some time.

1879. In respect of the farm of which you are the owner, the assessment has been maintained?—Yes.

Wages and rates.

1880. For your own farm, what you have had to complain of is, first, the increase in the rate of wages, and secondly, the increase in the rates?—Yes.

1881. At all events, you are in a better position, I presume, than your poor sons?—If I was not it would be a bad job for them.

1882. I mean as regards your own farm; it is not subject to the same difficulties as they are?—No.

Remedies.

1883. What remedies do you suggest?—I think that our landlords ought to meet us more fairly. I think when these figures (and I am inclined to think that they cannot be disputed) are shown to a landlord, he should meet us something, and particularly when he knows the rent is not coming from his farm, I think he ought to meet us something.

1884. Were the losses proportionately the same on the same under lease?—No; I think the unfairness only comes in to the tenant, if he is anything like a farmer, when a landlord says to him, I shall not let you go. I do not think there is any great piece of unfairness about it, in the case of that son of mine, who rents his farm under a yearly tenancy. I do not think he has any right to say to his landlord, "I shall give up." I say that he has to give 12 months' notice, and I do not think it is a fair case, except under a lease.

1885. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You were kind enough to give some very striking figures showing the loss in the first farm, which pays 330*l.* a year; you have given no corresponding figures for the farm for which 575*l.* a year is paid, and which is held on a yearly tenure; could you give us the figures?—I will tell you why I could not. He is in a better position, and lives in a more marketable place, and can reach Plymouth, and he keeps many cows. His reduction would not be to such an extent as the other farms, because he rears cattle, but not to such an extent as the other does. He simply buys a sheep and sells lambs. It is better land, and better adapted for that as a marketable article.

1886. Your chief complaint, as far as I understand at present, is with regard to the farm which is held on lease?—Yes; and then when I am speaking, I want to speak also of my neighbouring farmers. Some of the members of the Chamber of Agriculture wish me to make their position known as well.

1887. (*Chairman.*) But for the present we shall confine ourselves to your own experience. I understood you to say that as regards the second farm your son holds only under a yearly tenancy, you have not got the same complaint about that farm?—I do not see how I can.

Reduction of rent and termination of leases.

1888. What is your main complaint in respect to the first farm?—That the landlord with such figures as can be shown to him and cannot be disputed, I say that it is only fair that he should meet the tenants or let them off; meet them with a reduction of 10 per cent. My son went in on that farm with a capital of 3,000*l.*, and I say that he is entitled to some remuneration for that, but instead of that he does not get a penny in the way of reduction of rent, and I think that is a hard case.

1889. Of course, the condition you entered upon was a lease of 21 years?—Yes.

1890. You thought that things were at their worst?—I did.

1891. And you made an unfortunate speculation?—Yes, I did.

1892. And you now think that the landlord in view of that ought either to forgive you the rent or to break the lease?—That is what I think he should do. I think that these are unforeseen times this past year. I do not put it so much to the seasons, because we are subject to all that. I know there is a great deal in it, but I am not sure that that is a thing that should be taken into consideration. We cannot have any hold upon our landlords for that.

1893. I suppose we may put it that the fall in prices has been unprecedented altogether, such as nobody could have expected?—We never could have expected it.

1894. Not when your lease was entered upon?—No.

1895. And apart from the law on the subject you think that the landlords should, in consideration of that, reduce the rent, or allow you to give up the lease?—That is my grievance.

Land courts.

1896. If he refused to do so you think there should be a law to compel the landlord in such a case?—As there are so many good landlords going I cannot say that I am in favour of a land court, for instance, to make them do it; I cannot say that I am.

Termination of leases.

1897. That question of a land court is another matter. That would only apply when the farm is vacant, but I was speaking of the case of a lease?—I think it is a very great pity in both of these cases; I think it is a very great pity that there is not some power to prevent a man holding on so that the landlord should take every shilling from him. I do not think that it is fair to do it. 10 years ago it was thought desirable to have leases.

1898. But your present position is that where such unexpected things have happened the law should not insist upon the lease being maintained?—That is all that I can complain of.

1899. That is to put it in its mildest form?—Yes.

1900. Now as to the farmers in the neighbourhood; you have given us your experience, and now you want to tell us something about the tenants in the neighbourhood?—I think that such cases that I speak of, where they are under a lease, they should have an opportunity of giving their farms up.

1901. Are there many cases of leases in the neighbourhood?—I think there are, several.

1902. Have you heard general complaints of the same kind?—I have heard some complaints, but I do not think that all the landlords would be like the one I have mentioned.

1903. You think where tenants have held under leases from a certain date, where they were entered before the depression came on, the law should allow them to give up their leases?—Yes, that is my idea.

Yearly tenancies.

1904. Then in the case of holdings which are not held under lease, but are held under a yearly tenancy, what have you to say with regard to them?—My idea would be that it would be only fair for the tenant to give notice to quit and be allowed to leave the farm. If the landlord will not meet you I do not see what control there is there, but I think that those landlords being so usurping, and who will not give anything back, ought to meet the grievance in arrears.

1905. Are you in favour of intervention between landlord and tenant?—I do not think we have got to that pass.

1906. Has not it been mooted at the Chamber of Agriculture?—It has.

1907. What was the result?—There were more in favour of its not being held, because we have many good landlords as well as bad landlords. We only want to make laws for the bad ones. That is the difficulty we have got; the good landlords are all right. But such landlords as Lord St. Leven will not throw back 1 per cent.

1908. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Are the farms held on lease?—Those he calls accommodation land. He farms in west Cornwall. I do not know anything about them, but he calls them accommodation lands in Stoke Damerel.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

1909. (*Chairman.*) Are you of opinion that any alteration should be allowed in the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I thought there were one or two little matters. For instance, I think improvements cannot be carried out for drainage without the consent of the landlord. Is not that so?

Drainage.

1910. There are certain classes of improvements that cannot be made without the consent of the landlord. In the case of drainage, there is a saving provision with regard to that, that if the landlord does not give consent, the tenant may do the drainage without his consent. The landlord has the opportunity of doing the drainage himself, but if he refuses to do it, then the tenant can do it without him?—Could not he make a claim for it?

1911. Yes?—But by going to the Government they would do it, would they not?

1912. No, no?—Could he do it himself?

1913. Yes?—Against the owner's will?

1914. He is bound to ask the owner to do it; then the tenant can do the drainage?—I was not aware that that could be done.

1915. What alteration do you think should be made?—What I thought was, that if a tenant thought fit to make these improvements, and if his landlord says no—because some men want to know if you are going to improve yourself considerably, and them too; they would not allow any amount of capital upon it—but I certainly do think that the landlord should be protected as well, not to get a harum scarum tenant to lay out what he likes. He ought to prove that at the expiration of the time it would benefit the farm, and then he ought to be paid for what he has done. I was not aware that that could be done at present.

1916. It is only in the case of drainage?—I am not so strong as to buildings.

1917. You speak mainly of drainage?—I speak of drainage and permanent pasture.

Laying down permanent pasture.

1918. You mean laying down permanent pasture?—Yes. I should say that unless a man thought he was going to have a very long life and his children after him, he should not lay out permanent pasture himself.

1919. (*Mr. Lambert.*) You mean without adequate compensation?—Yes.

1920. (*Chairman.*) In the case of permanent pasture, when a tenant lays it down, you think that should be included in the ordinary improvements made by the landlord?—I think if the tenant is going to do it he ought to be well paid, and I think that a tenant must be very unwise to do it. For three or four years that land is never worth much after it has been laid down to grass, and it wants to be cultivated at a very great expense, and it takes away all the manure from your farm to put over that portion of the land laid down to grass.

1921. And you think that the tenant who undertakes that should be well compensated?—I do.

1922. And that he should have the power of laying down land to grass without the consent of the landlord?—No, I do not. I think that he would be very unwise to do it at all unless the landlord would give him very liberal terms. That is what I think. It might be the landlord's wish to have it done, but I do not think it is the tenant's interest to lay down permanent pasture.

1923. Is there any other matter under the Agricultural Holdings Act that you desire to see altered?—I do not know anything more.

Taxes on land.

1924. You have already said that the land is too heavily taxed as compared with other property?—I can hardly say as compared with other property. I think that it is taxed with a greater burden than it can bear. I think these taxes have grown upon it the last few years very considerably.

Beer.

1925. Then with regard to beer, what do you say?—That is a matter I have always thought of very great importance. It seems to me that you apply an Adulteration Act in many matters, and very properly so, too, I have no doubt. But why should not beer, the best beer that can be made from malt and hops—why should it not be made from malt and hops? They say it is made from mangold wurzel and sugar now. I do not know on what sort of principle that is allowed. Those who like that kind of beer let them drink it, but let them know that they are drinking it. Why should not beer be made of barley? It is one of our own commodities. I believe no country can grow it so well as England, in many districts. That seems a commodity that should be looked after.

1926. Do you grow barley yourself?—Not very much.

1927. How is that?—Mine is not a barley soil. We require oats for my cattle, and straw of oats is very much more valuable.

1928. However important this may be it would not help you much?—No.

1929. And how would it affect your two sons?—It would help them very considerably.

1930. Is there anything else you would like to suggest?—I do not know of anything special.

1931. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Upon those 350 acres you are under a one year's lease?—Yes.

1932. Have you any restrictions as to the cultivation?—No objectionable restrictions.

1933. Have you two straw crops following each other?—My son may have two crops following each other.

Sale of hay and straw.

1934. And may you sell hay and straw upon the farm?—Yes, I can.

1935. Are you obliged to give back an equivalent either in money or manurial value?—I should have to do it at the end of the lease, but I do not attach so much importance to that as many people do. My reason is this: I think if you are any very long distance from your market, if you take into consideration the expense of taking it there and returning the manurial value, I do not think that it would give so much profit as many people think it would. But there are times when it is a benefit. For instance, this last three or four years previous to this year hay has been selling in our markets at an average of 3*l*. per ton and no more. Now this month it is making from 5*l*. to 6*l*. I think if a man had reserved a rick or two of old hay—I know one man who has sold out 200 tons—it would be a very great hardship to be prevented from taking advantage of that. But it would not pay him to do it at 3*l*. per ton.

1936. But you could do that?—I could.

1937. Does that generally hold in that neighbourhood?—I do not think it does. I do not think that very many have the advantage that I have in that farm.

1938. Have you the right of shooting?—No, I have not.

1939. Is that generally withheld in your district?—Generally, I should think.

Price of milk.

1940. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) What are you getting per gallon for your milk?—10*d*. per gallon.

1941. Is there any move of the tenants of that district to go into co-operative works such as creameries and cheese factories?—I think not.

1942. They prefer selling the milk?—Yes.

1943. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) With regard to the farm of 340 acres, is your landlord a well-to-do man, if I may ask that question?—He is a jolly fellow.

1944. I mean in pocket?—He is a very jolly fellow.

1945. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Is he a rich man?—I am not sure that he is a rich man.

1946. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You do not think so?—He keeps a pack of hounds.

Leases.

1947. With his subscription, I suppose. With regard to your lease which appears to be at the foundation of most of your troubles; do you think that a lease ought to be broken if times are bad, as they are at present, and that the tenant should be released from it?—Yes.

1948. Supposing the converse were the case, that the times were very good, do you think that the landlord should be released from the agreement?—I think I may go a little way to answer that. If it came to a bad season and I went to my landlord to ask him, I think that it would be very unfair; but if we had a year or two—which we have had many years of now, eight years, ever since I took the farm—and it went down and down; it would be very unfair to go to him for the first two or three years, but I think that it is only fair, in such an unforeseen matter as this, to go to him now after eight years.

1949. Should you hold it to be fair, supposing there had been six or seven years of greatly increased prosperity, that the principle should apply in that case?—I suppose you could hardly say that that would be quite fair.

1950. Then you would not apply the same sauce to the goose as to the gander?—I quite understand your saying so, but what I mean is this: seeing that times, I am inclined to think, are going to be worse than what they are now, because they are sending cattle in such quantities, and our markets are choke full, we must not buoy up our minds that we shall have them better. I fancy that after these times it will be only fair to the landlord if times really improved, and wheat at 12*s*. or 6*s*. per bushel, and your beef gets as such a price, it is only fair that such a provision should be inserted in the lease.

1951. I am in full sympathy with the position that you describe, but I imagine that it rather points to this, that it is very disadvantageous to make a lease at all under the present circumstances?—That was not my idea years ago.

1952. Your views have changed upon that point?—Yes.

1953. But for this unfortunate lease you would not have felt any special difficulty?—I do not think that I could have a fair case. I should have a fair bargain.

1954. Do you agree that there should be a fixed impost upon foreign barley?—I do not.

Beer.

1955. You limit your proposals to making it compulsory on brewers to make their beer out of barley, malt, and hops only?—Not all their beer, but let us have beer of that kind, and let us know it, and let them label the foreign meat to know what we are about.

1956. You want a Pure Beer Bill?—Something like that.

1957. Do you think that would improve the position of the barley growers?—I think that it would; I fancy so.

1958. Is a tax on foreign barley generally favoured in your district or not?—I should think not, because it is of an inferior quality generally, and I fancy it comes over more for feeding stuff, than for malting purposes.

1959. In fact, I think that the general drift of your evidence comes to this; that the real remedy for the present difficulties, is a rise in the price of agricultural produce?—It is. It is a pity that farms should be let for even as low as they are, but still I hold that the farmers cannot pay it. I should like to see a rise but I do not know how it is to come about.

Sanitary rates.

1960. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You have a very high sanitary rate in your parish?—We have.

1961. Do you know how much it is?—I do not know.

1962. Have you had any sanitary work there?—Yes; we made an application for the sum of 1,000*l.* to be borrowed, and another application to have 500*l.* more borrowed for another parish, and so all that means money. That is only the thin edge of the wedge, because I see that there is going to be a very great amount to follow.

1963. The land is rated at a fourth to that rate?—That is the proportion.

1964. Have you got a school board?—We have not in our parish; we have got a voluntary school.

1965. When you speak of the rates having gone up at the present time to 2*s.* 8*d.*, what rate do you mean?—I think that they have all gone up of late.

1966. On account, perhaps, of the value of land diminishing?—I do not think that our valuation is less than ever it was.

1967. What is your parish?—St. Budeaux.

1968. And what is your union?—It is Plympton St. Mary.

1969. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Your son has been in occupation of his farm for eight years?—Yes.

1970. And his rent is 330*l.* a year?—Yes.

Reduction of rent.

1971. If he had a reduction of rent of what is prevalent in some places—33 per cent.—that would mean 110*l.* a year?—Yes.

1972. Do you think that 33 per cent. would be a fair reduction?—I think it would be as much as he could fairly expect. I think then that he might be able to pay; but I do not think he should go to the landlord for all. If the landlord would give him a certain portion, a per-centage, or even little or nothing, he should bear the burden as well as the landlord.

1973. But if your son had 33 per cent. reduction do you think he would be able to go on?—I think he would.

Rent paid out of capital.

1974. He is in reality paying the 110*l.* out of his capital for the eight years?—I do not think so for eight years. I do not think that the price of sheep has gone back all that time, but only about three years the price of sheep has gone back and wool is continually going back ½*d.* and 1*d.* per lb.

1975. So that he is now paying his rent out of his capital?—He is, and not only my son, but my idea is that farmers are getting poor and do not know it. I am only giving his deficiency in cash, but if I give you what his stock is worth so much less to what it was two or three years ago, it would be considerable now.

1976. Do you think a large number of farmers in Devonshire are paying their rent out of their capital?—I do.

1977. In the case of these leases do you think it would be desirable to have a simple form of procedure with respect to a fair rent that should be fixed?—I am not so far advanced. I am rather against that. I think that these few cases should not rule the many. If we went to market with our cattle and we could get 18*l.* a head I do not think that we should like to sell at 16*l.* a head.

Land court.

1978. Why do you object to an outside court?—Because I think it would make a disturbance between the landlord and tenant, and I think that they would never sit down quietly.

1979. Are your son and his landlord sitting down pretty quietly, your son having paid 110*l.* more than he ought to have paid?—Very.

1980. There you are bearing it?—I am in hopes that we shall see better times as he gets on.

1981. You are living in hopes?—Yes, the landlord is a capital fellow.

1982. But in what way is he a capital man?—Because he is a very jolly fellow.

1983. Does jollity enable your son to live?—He would rather live with a comfortable man than with an uncomfortable man.

1984. Would a kind and good sort of landlord be very likely to get a higher rent than a man who is rather irascible?—I am sure he would; some tenants would be better satisfied with a reduction of 50*l.* from such a landlord than 100*l.* from another landlord.

1985. Do you think there is a feeling growing in favour of a land court?—No, I do not think there is.

1986. If times get worse do you think that there would be a feeling in favour of it?—It must be so unless the leases can be abolished. If leases are abolished there will be no need for a land court.

1987. You mean for 21 years? Do you think that fixity of tenure was beneficial during the past years of tenancy?—Well, I thought we were at the bottom of the hill. I had been waiting for a long time and thought we had come there.

1988. Do you think that a good landlord who had made a fair reduction of rent would be affected by a land court?—I think it is a bit rough to step in between a good landlord and a tenant.

1989. Do you think they would step in in that case?—I am not so sure whether they would or not.

1990. There would be no reason to step in if you had a good landlord?—No, there would not.

1991. But then would not you think it desirable to step in between a tenant and a bad landlord?—I do.

1992. There you are in favour of a land court—I will not say a land court; an outside authority, a conciliation court, if you please to call it so—in the case of landlords who do not deal fairly with their tenants?—I do not think that should be held over the heads of good landlords.

1993. I am talking now about bad landlords?—I am not so far advanced as to vote for a land court up to this time.

1994. Supposing that your son, the one who is paying 575*l.* rent offered a fair rent for his farm and the landlord did not choose to accept that rent, do you think that it is fair that that son should be compelled to go to the expense of changing his farm and to incur the loss which must accrue to a man who has to go into a fresh neighbourhood?—I do not see why. Of the two evils let us have the least; losing 200*l.* a year and only 50*l.* for the change.

1995. Would the landlord let the land go out of cultivation?—He would not. Some landlords, I am sorry to say, have stewards, and they try to make the landlords think that it is worth the money; they say if you do not pay it another will.

1996. Do you think that reductions have been made in a greater degree to new tenants than to sitting tenants?—I do.

Farms let by tender.

1997. How are farms let in your neighbourhood?—By tender.

1998. And the man who offers the most money usually gets the farm?—Such a man as I may name, the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Morley, the Earl of St. Germains, and Lord Mount-Edgcumbe, would not take the highest bidder.

1999. Those are the good landlords; of course we do not make laws for good people, but only for bad people. Do you think the landlords are what you would place under the category of bad landlords who would accept the highest tender?—I almost think some of them would take half-a-crown extra.

Ground Game Act.

2000. Do the farmers suffer in your parts from the ravages of game?—Not very considerably.

2001. But they do suffer?—There are some that do. We have the power now to destroy rabbits.

2001. Do you think that power should be made that they should destroy rabbits exactly as they please?—I do.

2003. And do you favour an alteration in the Ground Game Act in that respect?—Yes.

2004. You should favour it?—I should.

2005. What do you consider as being in your part of the world the average general reduction of rent?—You must not take me over Devon and Cornwall.

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2006. I mean your own neighbourhood, where you can speak authoritively?—Not 7 per cent. certainly.

2007. Yet for all that the price of the agricultural produce which they have to sell has gone down more than 50 per cent.?—It has.

2008. (*Lord Vernon.*) What are they allowed to do with rabbits?—They are allowed to trap them in their holes. They must not be out of their holes.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

2009. (*Mr. Lambert.*) You would favour an alteration in the Agricultural Holdings Act which would give to the tenant compensation for all the improvements that added to the lettable value of the holding?—That is as far as I would go.

Compensation.

2010. And you would advocate a cheap, easy method of assessing this compensation?—I think that is a matter of great importance. I meant to have said something about that. I heard some evidence given by Mr. Harrison that they have a very great dread of it, and that it is a very great expense that is brought upon the ratepayers, and they hit up those who get very little out of it.

2011. Would such a tribunal as this meet the case: where two practical men and a county court judge could be appointed to assess a dispute between a landlord and tenant at a fixed reasonable rate—would you favour such a tribunal?—I would.

2012. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Disputes about what?—About compensation.

2013. (Mr. *Lambert.*) I said disputes about compensation; I was not referring to land then. (*To the witness.*) Do you suffer from railway rates in your part of the world?—I do not think so.

2014. Because you are near a market town?—We are near a market town. There are certain few things but not much to complain of.

2015. (*Lord Vernon.*) I have referred to the Act and I find that it is as I thought that the occupier himself may shoot the rabbits?—I thought not.

Ground Game Act.

2016. "The occupier himself and one other person "authorised in writing by such occupier, shall be the "only persons entitled under this Act to kill ground "game with fire-arms"?—That is not saying very much.

2017. (*Mr. Lambert.*) To be really of any use in killing rabbits you must have two or more guns?—Yes. You cannot kill them otherwise. You might ask a few friends, but your particular fellow will not have it.

2018. (*Captain Thomas.*) Do the tenants generally avail themselves of the protection of the Ground Game Act? Do they shoot or does the landlord allow them to shoot?—You see there is nothing to prevent them. I just named to you where my son is farming. I suppose game would be as plentiful under the acreage there as it would be almost in any place, because it is not a very large place. The gentleman who owns it, Mr. Cory, Langdon Court—the Duke of Edinburgh was there on Monday, and the Duke was there yesterday, and shot with five others over 1,600 head in one day, and that would be a large thing for one day's work. But I do not think he would like to see his tenant running about with his gun. I do not think he would say—being such a good common sense man—that you shall not do it.

2019. He has not made an agreement that his tenant is not to do so?—I do not think that he would say so, but still he would rather not.

2020. Do any of the landlords agree with their tenants not to use a gun or preserve the rabbits for them?—I am not aware.

2021. Is there much damage done to crops by game?—I dare say there is a good bit in some places.

2022. Are farmers compensated?—No, I do not think they are much compensated.

2023. You say that the farmers pay their rents out of capital. Have they much capital?—Just like myself. A few years ago I had money but the longer I live the poorer I am.

2024. Are they borrowing?—They are much poorer than they were a few years ago.

2025. What I asked was if the farmers are borrowing money at the present time to pay their rents?—I doubt whether they are doing much of that. Bankers generally are pretty sharp, and I fancy that they think that lending to a farmer is lending to a bad customer.

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Labourers.

2026. What is the general condition of the labourer now compared with previous years, is it better or worse?—I think that we are better at this moment, but I am afraid the time is coming when they will get their share, for I have seen them so plentiful, such as they are.

2027. Are they generally members of some friendly society or sick club or something of that kind?—Not many of them.

2028. Have they all got cottages?—The ones I am alluding to have got cottages.

2029. Have they got any land?—They have as much garden as they can cultivate.

2030. Do they pay rent?—No; they get that with their wages; it is part of their wages.

2031. What is the usual mode of hiring? Is it by the year, month or week?—By giving a month's notice, it is by the week.

Hours of labour.

2032. What are the hours of labour?—They vary very much; it depends upon the occupation that they have.

2033. Take a carter in the summer time?—A carter would be at his work at 6.30, and then he would get half an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner, and leave off work at half-past five.

2034. What would be his hours in the winter?—In the winter it is just the same, very little difference. He is not wanted so much in the winter as in the summer.

Quality of labour.

2035. Is the quality of labour as good as in times past?—It is very different.

2036. How do you account for it?—It is easily accounted for, very easily I think, because take the school boys before they come away to work. I have had the honour of being a member of the Board of Guardians where I am now, for many years on different boards. You see the law is this if a man has got five or six children, and they are at home half starving, if they do not pass the standard, or unless they are over 13 years of age they are not allowed to go to work. They might be put out part of the time, I think. It is a very great pity that it is not allowed, and I think these restrictions are carried to too great an extent.

2037. Has the supply of labourers decreased; have you a sufficient number in the neighbourhood?—We have plenty, such as they are, but they are not efficient men; they are not brought up to farm-work; that is to say, we get so many of the unemployed. Then the children do not go to work until they are 13 or 14, and they are not fit for anything, and then they come to the towns and you have only got the unemployed labourer to do your work.

Agents.

2038. You said something about the agents. Are they practical men as a rule in your district?—Some of them.

2039. Are solicitors sometimes engaged as agents?—At some places they are.

2040. And are they without any personal knowledge of agriculture?—Some of them are at some places.

Fixity of tenure.

2041. (*Mr. Everett.*) On the question of fixity of tenure. You have to do with land on three different terms of tenure; that is, a holding by the year for one son, and another son farming under a lease of 21 years, and one farm you own yourself?—Yes.

2042. I gather from your evidence that the more fixity of tenure you have the worse trouble you are in—that you like your farm best where you have not got fixity of tenure?—I do in such times as these.

2043. When prices were going up you liked fixity of tenure?—Yes.

2044. When they came down you do not like it?—That is so.

2045. (*Mr. Lambert.*) If you had a fair rent would you like fixity of tenure?—I do not know.

2046. (*Mr. Everett.*) I meant fixity of tenure at a fixed price?—Really I do not know about a fixed price; I do not think that it would be wise for any tenant to have a lease at this moment; I do not think that we know what is going to happen.

Fall in prices.

2047. I understood that your principal grievance, as compared with the past, has been the fall in prices?—Everything has gone down. I can assure you that the figures I have given are rather under the mark than over. I am sure that they are under the mark. We were in a better position to pay the rent eight years ago than at present, if we had it for nothing. We want to press upon our landlords to meet us, and I

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think it only wise to do so, but they hold on to the last and get rid of their tenants, and by-and-bye they will have to do it.

2048. You told us when you took this farm a few years ago you expected that prices were not likely to remain so low?—That is so.

2049. Were not you aware that at that time some of the leading economists of the country predicted that we had entered upon a period of falling prices? Perhaps you were not aware of the fact at the time?—If I had I do not think that I should have taken much notice of it, because I have generally an idea and try to carry it out. I was wrong this time.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

Compensation.

2050. (*Lord Vernon.*) Do you suppose that most of the farmers have been satisfied with the compensation under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I think it has been too expensive a machinery to work out. I do not think that it has given satisfaction. It certainly is a benefit, there is no doubt about that. It is a very great benefit, because before this was in existence, good gracious! a farmer might go to any expense and no matter what expense he ran to he would not be compensated. I remember a farmer in our neighbourhood that went on a farm and took it for 14 years, and the year before the lease was out he went to the landlord and asked to be released, and the landlord said, "What "are you in such a hurry for? Why not let it stand "over? You know we should not part." But when it came to the day the landlord said, "I do know not what "is the value of your farm." That farmer made out that he had spent 30 per cent., and 25 per cent. of that belonged to the tenant, and a year before the landlord said we should not think of parting. That is the sort of landlord to put into the land courts.

2051. But you talk in a most casual way about how easy it is for a man under a yearly tenancy to leave his farm, and that consequently you do not think there ought to be any difficulty as regards a man in that position. But surely unless the compensation is full a man is nearly in as bad a position under a yearly tenancy as under a lease?—I do not see any hardship in that; but I say there is very great hardship in leaving a farm with one year's notice, but of the two evils I should prefer the least. It is better to let him lose 100*l.* or 200*l.* than to lose the whole lot.

2052. As a practical man you think that the settlement under the Agricultural Holdings Act ought to be simplified?—I fancy it is; it is a great improvement to have it, because we generally see that it makes bad landlords shake; they do not like it, and it does them a lot of good.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

Fifth Day.

Friday, 24th November 1893.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., in the Chair.

Viscount Cobham.
The Right Hon. Baron Vernon.
The Right Hon. Henry Chaplin, M.P.
Sir Robert Nigel Fitzhardinge Kingscote, K.C.B.
Robert Giffen, Esq., C.B.
Captain Owen Thomas.
Francis Allston Channing, Esq., M.P.
John Clay, Esq.
Cornelius Neale Dalton, Esq.
Robert Lacey Everett, Esq., M.P.
John Gilmour, Esq., M.P.
George Lambert, Esq., M.P.
William Cutlack Little, Esq.
Walter Hume Long, Esq., M.P.
Charles Whitehead, Esq., F.L.S.

Herbert Lyon, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. Crawford, Esq., } *Assistant*
Freeman Thomas, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. John Watson called and examined.

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2053. (*Chairman.*) You are land agent to Lord Macclesfield, are you not?—Yes.

2054. And you manage estates in Buckinghamshire, Dorsetshire, Oxfordshire, and Essex?—I have had none in Essex lately.

2055. How much have you in the other counties?—In Dorsetshire we have a small lot, only about 500 or 600 acres.

2056. How much in Oxfordshire?—About 6,000 acres.

2057. And in Buckinghamshire?—About 1,500.

2058. You gave evidence before the Duke of Richmond's Commission in 1880, I believe?—Yes.

2059. Do you still manage Lord Macclesfield's Home Farm as you did in 1880?—Yes, the same farm and the same place.

2060. How many acres are there?—600.

Fall in prices.

2061. Will you state to the Commission what is the present state of the land which you now manage?—I have noted down a few facts about the state of things. In 1881—that was the time of the former Commission—I was then in hopes that the depression would shortly pass over. I had no thought of the price of corn coming down so very much as it did. I thought the bad seasons that we had then for about two years would pass over and we should get on better; but instead of that, the prices have come very much down indeed. There was then a reduction of from 10 to 15 per cent. returned to the tenants, and since then the reduction has increased very much, something from 15 to 20 per cent. more in many cases.

2062. I understand that in 1880 the land which you managed had already suffered largely from depression mainly due to the seasons?—I thought so then.

Reduction of rents.

2063. And there had been temporary abatements of rent, or were they then permanent reductions of rent?—We have been obliged instead of having temporary abatements to make them permanent, and they have increased them very much.

2064. They were only temporary abatements of rent up to then?—That was so.

2065. But since then you have made these abatements permanent, and have been obliged to increase them from 10 to 15 per cent. by 10 or 20 per cent. more, is that so?—Yes.

2066. What is the total reduction of rent upon the land that you managed as compared with 12 years' ago. I mean the permanent reductions?—It would amount to about from 25 to 35 per cent. on the ordinary good lands.

2067. And on bad lands is it more than that?—It is 30 per cent., but a good many of them are 33 per cent., most of them have lost one-third.

2068. You said on the good lands?—Yes.

2069. Is it greater upon the inferior lands?—The loss on the inferior lands is much greater.

2070. What is it on the inferior lands?—The inferior lands that used to be let at about 20*s.* to 25*s.* per acre are now let at 12*s.* 6*d.* and under.

2071. That is with the 50 per cent. reduction?—It is; on the thin lands on the Chiltern Hills.

2072. Are those arable farms?—They are all arable farms.

2073. When you speak of the good land where the reduction has been less, is that arable land or grass land?—They are mostly mixed on the lower farms, in some cases one-third would be pasture, and in other cases half would be arable and half pasture.

Land laid down in permanent grass.

2074. Has there been much land laid down in grass?—Not a very large quantity of land has been laid down to permanent grass. I think on the hills that the best way of getting over the difficulty is to lay down to grass for about two or three years and then break it up again. It does not take kindly to grass in a general way, and it does very well for about two or three years.

2075. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are you speaking of the land on the chalk or on the oolite?—I am speaking of land over the chalks.

2076. (*Chairman.*) You say, that you found it well to lay down the grass for two or three years, and then plough it again?—I think they work it cheaper in that way than in other ways. It recuperates and the land gets better, and it produces more. When they try to lay down to permanent grass after the first three or four years, it takes much time before it grazes to have any value.

Changes of tenancy.

2077. With these reductions of rent, have you been able to keep the tenants?—Mostly. We have not had many changes even since 1881. But I am afraid there seem more signs of change now. Even at the low rent, although they do not ask for further reductions, the persons who are wealthy, and can do without it, are giving them up.

2078. Those who are well off and can do without it. But the others who are not so well off, do they hold to their farms?—There is one farm this year that a person has given up, that he has held all the time through which he has had his reductions with the others, but he has given it up this year, because he says that it does not pay enough. The poor ones stick to them, but they have great indulgences from the landlord, or else they could not. It is a very bad state of things. If the landlord had insisted upon his rights, half the farms would have been tenantless.

Arrears of rent.

2079. Are there large arrears on the properties you mention?—In 1881 there were scarcely any arrears. They did not begin until 1879, but since then they have increased very much.

2080. What do they amount to now?—In 1881 from 10 to 15 per cent. abatements were made, and I can mention cases that had to be made into permanent reductions of from 10 to 15 per cent. more, making the rents of good land, from 25 to 30 per cent.; and in some cases 33 per cent. was taken off.

2081. But about the arrears, have the arrears accumulated?—The arrears have accumulated within these few years considerably. The arrears are nearly double what they were, in 1881 even although considerable sums have been written off. The position of many of the tenants is worse in every way within the last few years.

2082. Has any land gone out of cultivation?—None; the land is pretty good that I have had to do with.

Land in hand.

2083. What is your experience with regard to the farm which you have in hand, and manage yourself?—The income has gone sadly down on the land in hand even with the greatest care. I should say that it is now quite a rent less gross income than it was in 1878 when things were pretty straight.

Results of farming since 1878.

2084. How many years have you managed it?—About 38 years.

2085. Did you generally work it at a profit until 1878?—It worked very well up to 1878. It was meant to be worked for a profit. It was never meant as a mere fancy thing.

2086. The owner wished to make the best of it?—Yes.

2087. And up to 1878 you did well?—We did very well up to 1878. It paid its rent and made a fair little sum besides, but since then it has gone on getting a great deal worse. We have had two years' bad crops as well as low prices.

2088. I suppose the two years were 1878 and 1879?—1878 and 1879. And 1879 and 1880 were worse with us than 1878.

2089. Then you had after that a series of good years?—We had a few good years, but the prices got very much down. The wheat has fallen since then from 12*s.* to 17*s.* per quarter, and the barley has gone down from about 8*s.* to 10*s.* per quarter lower than it was then. I think as to the price of wheat perhaps the reduction is owing to the very cheap means of conveyance that brings foreign wheat in so cheaply; and the malting barley has lost a good deal of its price from the circumstances of their putting the duty on beer instead of malt.

2090. Taking the last 10 years, but omitting the years 1878, 1879 and 1880, can you say what the general financial result on the farm has been?—It has been mostly bad ever since.

2091. Have you made a rent upon it or not?—No.

2092. No rent at all?—It has made a certain amount of rent, but it has not paid its rent or anything like it for some years.

2093. Nor the interest on the capital?—No, not one bit; and these two or three years very little rent.

2094. But still you grow wheat on it?—We still grow wheat. It is good land for wheat and we still grow wheat upon it; but the wheat does not pay much, and particularly these last few years; the wheat, has been, in fact, cheaper to feed with than any other grain almost.

2095. Do you sell the straw at all?—No.

Freedom of sales.

2096. In case of the tenants, have you relaxed conditions of that kind?—Yes, a good deal. The tenants have been allowed to sell some wheat straw and clover hay, and have mostly taken advantage of that.

Price of straw.

2097. Has the price of straw improved?—The price of straw is very high just now, but it is a very scarce article this year. I do not think we have one fourth of the usual quantity of straw.

2098. But take other years, the last three or four years, have they made much by the sale of straw?—It does not amount to much; when the prices are about 2*l.* per ton it does not come to much, but when the price comes to 3*l.* and 3*l.* 10*s.* it is worth selling.

Wages.

2099. As regards wages, has there been any fall in wages?—The wages are much about the same as they were in 1881.

Quality of labour.

2100. What do you say as to the quality of the labour?—I think it is much about the same. I think the labour is quite as good as it was. I think the labourers are more contented and more willing to stick to their work than they were when there was so much change and agitation among them, and that seems to have ceased very much; and they seem a good deal more contented. We seem to get on very well with them. The gross amount of the cost of labour in 1881 was 1,255*l.* 19*s.* 2*d.*, and it goes down to the present time as follows:—In 1882, 1,170*l.*; in 1883, 1,108*l.*; in 1884, 1,242*l.*; in 1885, 1,157*l.*; in 1886, 1,174*l.*; in 1887, 1,016*l.*; and in 1888, 1,022*l.*

Annual cost of labour.

2100*a*. That is your outlay upon the labour of each year?—Yes, the outlay over 600 acres. And then it goes on: in 1889, 1,050*l.*; in 1890, 1,048*l.*; in 1891, 1,192*l.*; in 1892, 1,200*l.*; and in 1893, ending Michaelmas 1893, it is 1,136*l.*, so that there is not much difference.

2100*b*. In 1880, before the Duke of Richmond's Commission, you said that there had been a rise of wages for the labourers up to 1878, and then that there was a fall between 1877 and 1881?—Yes, there was a little.

2100*c*. And since 1881 they have remained about stationary?—About stationary; there is very little difference over the whole farm since 1891, and the wages are just about the same as they were, 12*s*. in the winter and 13*s*. in the summer for ordinary labour, and 13*s*. and 14*s*. for the hands that are tending cattle. They have large advantages, and cottage-rent free, and 3*l*. as wages at Michaelmas which counts more than another 2*s*. for them.

Selling price of wheat.

2101. In 1881 you stated that you could only grow wheat profitably at the price of 44*s*. and 45*s*. per quarter?—I thought so and people thought that was low then, but they would be glad to grow it now if they could get that for it. 1*s*. on the quarter of wheat makes about 1*s*. an acre difference on the value of all your arable land. If you grow four quarters to the acre, and one fourth of that arable land being wheat you have 10*s*. to 17*s*. per acre, that would really reduce the value of the land something like from 10*s*. to 17*s*. an acre over the whole of the arable land.

2102. What do you say—is that from 1*s*.?—From 1*s*. per quarter of wheat if you grow the four quarters of wheat on the one fourth of the land would run to 1*s*. all round the arable land.

2103. So that a fall of 10*s*. per quarter in the wheat means a fall of 10*s*. per acre in rent?—And the reductions of rent have been more than that on good land.

Rates.

2104. Have you anything to suggest with regard to the future?—One hardly knows what would improve us. There is one thing we have a little advantage in. We get cheaper manures. The manures are a moderate price and we have a little advantage in the lower prices of feeding stuffs. But I can see no means of helping the cultivators of the land otherwise than by trying to relieve the land of some rates. I do not think it would be any good to halve the rates between the tenant and the landlord, because, of course, the value of the land would rise and fall at once as between the two unless the land could be relieved altogether of some of its burdens.

2105. How have the rates been during the last ten years, have they remained about the same?—They have not been heavy; they are not so heavy as they were a good many years ago, but still the rates are too heavy. It is hardly fair that road rates should all come on the land. I think that the people who use them—brewers and others who make a good deal of money by using them—ought to help to keep them up. I do not know how it would be managed.

2106. Have the tenants had the advantage of lower assessments?—Yes, every one has taken advantage of that. Since the rent has been lowered they have had their assessments lowered too.

2107. They have got some benefit in that way?—Yes, but it produces less money. You are obliged to pay more per pound.

2108. Have the rates risen in the pound? I thought you said they were about the same?—I think they are about the same.

2109. Then the tenants have had the advantage of the lower assessment?—They have.

2110. Then you have nothing to suggest except greater relief in the direction of taxation?—I think that is the only thing that could be done for them. I think so.

Farmers' capital.

2111. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you think that it would be an advantage if more capital were applied to the land?—Yes, there is no doubt about it. There are many farmers, who have skill to manage the land very well, who are very short of capital. I think that bankers used to advance money to them years ago when things were prosperous, and now they hold their hands very much. I also think that the farmers took on rather too much land and were in the hands partly of dealers. That was also withdrawn, so that a good deal of pressure might be relieved if they could have money at a cheap rate. The skilful farmer that is solvent and is able to go on if he had capital at a cheap rate just to stock his land properly, would be better. Those who do not have any stock at all now have dreadful losses on account of the lower price of grain. They lose by every turn, those who have plenty of stock do better.

Loans.

2112. Do you suggest that the Government should advance money to tenant farmers?—I am not sure how far it can be done, but there are many farmers that really go and farm their land in a way, if they had the means could do well, who cannot go on well now.

Outlay of landlords' capital.

2113. Do you think that the outlay of landlords' capital is unduly restricted of late years?—Very much indeed. Then it is not needed so much. We drained all this land when I first came to Lord Macclesfield's; every bit of the land that was in need of draining was drained within the first 10 or 12 years, and those drains have gone on, and nothing has been required since. If any field was found to be wet it would be drained for them now. But there is not much that the landlord could do for them more.

2114. In the case of your own farm, you have ample capital, I suppose?—Yes, abundance of capital and abundance of stock.

2115. And yet you quite fail to make it pay?—Yes.

2116. It is a dead loss?—It does lose.

Quality of labour.

2117. As to the quality of the labourer, is that much the same?—I think so. I think that the labourers are much the same with us. I find them quite as willing to do a day's work as they ever were. They are certainly a little better paid than they were, and their comforts are more looked after than they were years and years ago.

Expenditure on improvements.

2118. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Have you had to lay out much money in building on the farms under your control during the last 10 years?—There has been a great deal of money laid out in buildings and keeping in repair. The tenants will do nothing for themselves, and those who are able, demand more than they used to do, and we must do it. It is obliged to be done. It really digs very much into the rents, the outlays on repairs, and improvements on the buildings.

2119. According to the agreements, were the tenants to repair their buildings or not?—They were in our case mostly to pay half the labour on the repairs, and we found all the material.

2120. But now as a matter of fact you have been finding the whole?—We are obliged to find the whole.

Deterioration in cultivation.

2121. Has the land generally deteriorated in cultivation by the tenant farmers in the last 10 years?—Well, I think perhaps, half of it has deteriorated.

2122. And in condition too?—Yes, I think so. It is want of means; they have not the spirit, and have not the means to keep up their cultivation, and keep it in the order that it should be in. There are a great many of them very discouraged.

Rental.

2123. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Would you tell me what the actual rent per acre is of your Oxfordshire property?—It runs from 23*s*. to 25*s*.

2124. And in Buckinghamshire?—In Bucks the rents were about 25*s*. and they are now reduced to 12*s*. 6*d*.

2125. And in Dorset?—In Dorset the reductions have not been so great, but these few years have pressed very badly upon them. The reductions in Dorset were only from 10 to 15 per cent.

Depression in Dorset.

2126. And there has been more depression in Dorset, I think you say, than in the other counties?—Yes, through the seasons only these two years. Before that they seemed to get on very well; there were no arrears until two years ago.

2127. And yet the reductions have been less in Dorset?—The reductions have been less. It is all grass that I have had to do with mostly there, and it is mostly dairy, the farmer and his family doing the work.

2128. Are the farms let on leases or are they yearly holdings?—Yearly holdings.

Rent on land in hand.

2129. May I ask you what rent you put on your own farm that you have in hand?—30*s*. per acre.

2130. Have you any small tenants on your estate?—About 100 acres is among the smallest.

Large and small holdings.

2131. Do you think they have done better in this time of depression than the rest?—I think they have done worse.

2132. What do you say about the largest holders of land?—Our largest holders have done rather better than the others. The largest holders of the land have from 400 to 500 acres—we have none larger than that.

2133. Would you call a 400-acre farm a large farm?—A 400-acre farm is among the largest. We have about half-a-dozen of 500 acres let.

2134. How is it distributed; what would be the cultivation, the division of the crops?—The 500-acre farm.

2135. Is it mostly a fair proportion of grass?—I should think about half grass.

2136. In Oxfordshire you are speaking of?—I am talking of Oxfordshire; taking the county as a whole I think it would be half-and-half.

Fall in prices.

2137. (*Mr. Long.*) You told us just now in answer to the Chairman that the prices of produce have been the real cause of the trouble and is the real cause now?—Yes.

2138. Have you formed any opinion at all how far the price of produce is affected in the opposite direction by the diminished cost of production, that is to say, have you been able to form an opinion as to the extent and use of machinery?—I think you should put that against the other and try to think out the advantages we have, and it seems to me that there is a saving on account of having cheaper labour and cheaper manures.

2139. By cheaper labour you mean machine labour instead of hand labour?—You get your harvest in rather quicker and that is the point rather than real cheapness. We find that we are saving about 5*s.* an acre.

2140. Did you take that into consideration when you quoted your figure just now of a falling off of 12*s.* to 17*s.* in fall of prices?—That is gross on one side.

2141. Are you taking anything into consideration in the shape of cheapened production?—We do save something of that in cheaper food for horses and cattle.

2142. Is not there a little saved by the system of bringing the stock to earlier maturity; the practice which I imagine exists in Oxfordshire of selling out the lambs earlier than they used to do?—We have always sold sheep at a year old, and our cattle at two and three years old.

Sheep-breeding.

2143. Have the sheep farmers at all attempted the more modern system of forcing out the lambs much younger?—They are going from 8 to 12 months old. Most of those who keep Hampshire Downs, and Oxfordshire Downs, the lambs dropped in March get off the land in November and December. They begin in November and get them off in December and onward, until they are a year old.

2144. Have they tried the crossing of Hampshire or Oxfordshire Downs with the Cotswold or Scotch sheep with the view of getting the winter lambs?—No. I have not seen that.

Rates.

2145. With reference to the assessment you told us that the farmers had derived the full benefit of the reduced assessment consequent on the reduced rent?—They have.

2146. You also told us that notwithstanding the fact that the assessment had been reduced, the rates had not increased?—I do not think they have.

2147. Does not that point to one inevitable conclusion, that these burdens have been shifted from the agricultural shoulders to some other class of property?—Most probably; the cheap bread and cheap farming produce would tell in making cheaper keep for poor people.

2148. You mistake me. That has nothing to do with the rates?—It will have everything to do with them. If a union contract for bread at 3½*d.* per lb., it would not cost them so much as if they had to pay 9*d.*

2149. In that case the rates would have fallen. As I understand they have not been raised?—The reason why they have not been raised is that the assessments have fallen, and the cheaper bread, I fancy, has kept down the expenditure.

2150. Do you think that the cheaper bread consumed in the workhouse would in any way make up for the reduced assessment?—I think that we have had a good deal of help for the rates from the Government for the last two years. That has helped us out.

2151. That is the point. I wanted to ascertain whether in your opinion the fact that, although the assessments have been reduced while the rates have remained the same is not due very largely to the system of what is called, for want of a better term, grants in aid, which have ceased to be grants in aid, but are now contributions from the Imperial exchequer?—They have. When you have very cheap bread you do not have so many people falling on the rates.

2152. Is that the case—that pauperism has decreased?—I think so considerably.

2153. Then I presume that you attribute the maintenance of the rates at the same level very largely to the effect of the grants in aid, or contributions from the Imperial exchequer?—The grants in aid and the cheap food helping to keep poor people from falling on the rates.

Rent on land in hand

2154. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You reckon that that home farm should produce 30*s.* per acre. Is that the rent you put upon it?—Yes.

2155. What has it produced in the last 10 years? You say you make something by it. Are you able to say how much an acre it has made?—I do not think I have the particulars with me, but it has produced about from 30*s.* to 2*l.* an acre less in the gross—than it did in better times.

2156. But you do not know what it produces now on an average in the shape of rent?—I do not think that we have had any rent for the last two years.

2157. (*Chairman.*) But the eight years before that?—Before that it did produce a little.

2158. How much?—The rent was 950*l.* or something of that sort and it produced from 500*l.* to 700*l.*

2159. On the average of these eight years?—In most of the other years.

2160. And in the last two years nothing?—In the three years 1879 to 1881 it did nothing.

2161. But then from 1881 to two years ago it produced from 500*l.* to 700*l.* a year?—From 500*l.* to 700*l.* a year.

2162. And the last two years nothing?—Nothing.

2163. Of course the last two years have been very bad seasons for wheat?—Very bad seasons.

2164. And the prices combined?—Yes, and very little produce.

2165. But you made something more than half your rent?—Yes, on the average of the other years.

2166. Therefore your experience very much tallies with the experience of farmers, namely, that all round the rent has been reduced from 30 to 50 per cent.?—Yes, I think so.

Rates.

2167. (*Mr. Lambert.*) In your suggested remedies your principal suggestion was to relieve the land of rates. Can you give any statement as to the amount of rates per acre upon your land, or upon the land you have in charge?—It would be about 4*s.* or a little over.

2168. You have included poor rates and highway rates?—Yes, the poor rates and the highway rates.

2169. And the school rates?—We have no school rates in our district, because we have no board school; we have a private school.

Farmers' capital.

2170. You said just now that many farmers were short of capital. Were they short of capital prior to 1880?—I think myself that they had perhaps rather more land than their capital would take, but they have had help from the banks and other sources that are now dried up.

2171. Do you think that farmers' capital has diminished since 1880?—Very much; and a good many were farmers that had saved something and who have simply given it up from 1879. In fact, from 1874 to 1884, these 10 years, a good many old farmers gave up farming, and the farms went into younger hands, and the younger men came in short of capital, and I think in that way it has helped the depression.

2172. But my point is this: has the farmers' capital diminished since 1880?—It has, no doubt.

2173. Are your farms let by tender?—No.

2174. Do you practically fix the rent?—Yes, mostly Of course it is open to a man to make an offer if you fix the rent.

Sporting rights.

2175. Have your tenants the right of killing ground game?—Yes.

2176. That is the extended right not permitted under the Ground Game Act?—Only under the Act at home, close to home; but all the tenants that lie wide have the full shooting.

Deterioration in cultivation.

2177. Is the land well farmed in your district?—Yes, I think it is mostly pretty fairly farmed over the district I have to do with.

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2178. Because in the evidence before the Royal Commission on Labour you said, or you are reported to have said, "I do not know a parish where the land is well farmed?"—I do not know a parish where the whole land is well farmed now. I certainly could not say that the land over a parish is anything like farmed so well as it might be.

2179. Is it generally well farmed?—I can hardly say that it is generally, because if you were going over a place you would see only one farm here and there that was really well done.

2180. What is the reason, in your opinion, that it is not well farmed?—It is difficult to trace; in some cases it is that the people really have not the skill as well as the capital to do it.

Arrears.

2181. You said just now that your arrears had increased to double the amount they were in 1880?—Yes.

2182. Could you give us any amount, in proportion to the net rent, of the arrears?—I think I could.

2183. (*Chairman.*) Do the arrears amount to one year's rent on the estate, or half a year?—No, they would not be a year's rent.

2184. Something between half and three-fourths?—About a half year's rent, taking the estate as a whole.

2185. Have you written off a good many arrears?—A good many arrears. The farmers have paid their rent well up to 1879. Then they had great losses by losing all their sheep and some cattle, and there were two years then, I am speaking of individuals that I have in my mind, who were unable to pay, and those arrears were in a great part written off.

2186. Those were losses due to bad seasons?—The losses were due then to bad seasons, but these two years they were able to pay reduced rents without getting further into arrear, so that they are getting on.

Rents before 1879.

2187. (*Mr. Lambert.*) So that really the reason they are keeping their farms is because they were paying too much rent before?—Well, for 20 years or 25 years they paid the rent very well and they never complained that it was too much, and so we were bound to believe that it was fair and right up to the year 1879. Disastrous years came and they lost their cattle, and the crops were bad as well, and of course it proved disastrous to them. One does not know if the rents had been lower all through whether they would have saved anything to tide them over or not, or whether they would have spent the money as they went on and would not have been any better off. I do not know that. But the rents were supposed to be fair.

2188. (*Mr. Channing.*) I think you said if the owner wished to make improvements he could do so?—Yes.

2189. I suppose the rents from which those reductions were made were full rents, the rents before 1878?—It was the farm in my own hands that I said we had made the most of.

2190. The whole estate I understood you to say. Would you say that the rents from which these reductions have been made were full market rents or low rents?—They were fair market rents before that disastrous year of 1879; they were just fair rents. The land was not cheap, but it was quite fair and satisfactory, I mean.

Reduction of rent.

2191. I do not think you stated to the Chairman from what year the reductions were increased and made permanent. You said that the reductions were increased by 10 to 20 per cent. in addition to the 10 or 15 per cent. before, and I should like to know from what year the permanent reductions were made?—They were made permanent, in fact there were two reductions made about 1884 and another about 1886 or 1887, I mean 1888 or thereabouts. As we went on things did not mend, and they asked for their rents to be fixed so that they might get the rates down, and so it was done.

2192. That was after the tenants had been subjected to the full force of the depression for about six years?—Yes; but they were getting returns before that.

2193. Of 10 to 15 per cent.?—Yes, and then they were made fixtures, because the tenant wished to get his rates down. It was not fair for a man that had a fixed low rent to get a lower rate to pay because it threw a heavier rate on others. The rents had to be fixed to adjust the rates.

2194. In the case of the Dorset reductions which looked much smaller than the others, why did they only receive 10 to 15 per cent., what is the special reason for that?—There seemed a demand for land, and they seemed satisfied with that reduction. It is all grass land and the tenants did their own work.

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Loans to farmers.

2195. You spoke of loans to farmers; for what purpose do you wish loans to tenant farmers?—It would be for buying stock if a man could have a loan, but I do not know whether it would be any good to them or not. I fancy that a sort of permanent loan, one that would extend over a considerable time and at a small rate of interest, would be of benefit to them.

2196. Do you think a farmer could get a loan of that kind if he were on a yearly tenancy, and practically living on the goodwill of his landlord?—I do not think that he could get it without the security of the landlord.

2197. Would you have a landlord become a joint security?—The landlord would have to give security, or someone would have to give security. I do not think he could ask for it without, but I know that more capital in the hands of a good many of our farmers would improve their position.

The law of distress.

2198. Would not farmers have more access to capital for working their farms if the law of distress were abolished?—I do not think it. I think that a tenant now has the advantage of having his rent to stand over for a good many months after it is due. It sometimes is allowed to stand over even six or twelve months, and he pays no interest for it. If there was no law of distress we should be obliged to insist upon the punctual payment at the day, and I think that would be against the tenant rather than in his favour.

2199. Has not the law of distress operated to bring tenants with too small an amount of capital on the land?—I do not think so.

Large and small farms.

2200. You spoke about the very large farms doing better than the small ones. Could you give us what the character of those farms was and is, and what the relative rent is?—Yes, the farms that I speak of, the large farms with good land, high-rented farms, half grass, were rented at 44*s.* and 45*s.* per acre in the good times.

2201. What was the small holding?—And the small holding was rented, a bit of good land but all arable, at about 45*s.* per acre rent.

2202. Were the same reductions made in both cases?—About the same.

Position of tenants.

2203. (*Captain Thomas.*) Do you consider the majority of your tenants to be solvent?—Yes, I do consider the majority are solvent, but they are short of capital. I do believe that if they were to sell out in these very low prices, they would have very little to go out with, because the value of their stock has so much depreciated these last two years.

2204. Do you consider that they are able to make their rents—the reduced rents I mean, out of their holdings?—Yes, I have no doubt about the ones that pay are making it out of their holdings.

2205. (*Mr. Everett*) You have been questioned about the time when your tenants paid high rents; in your opinion were your tenants doing better when they were paying the high rents than now, when paying the low ones?—Very much better.

2206. The higher prices benefitted the tenant as well as the landlord?—Yes, certainly.

Land laid down to grass.

2207. You spoke of their laying down land for three years to grass, and then breaking it up again. Do not you find that that fills it full of twitch and root weeds, and makes it very foul?—I do not think so. I only spoke of land on the hill.

2208. Heavy land?—Light land on the chalk. I think it would be better farmed in that way. I have had a farm of that sort, myself, or under my care at least, for something like 15 years, and it is perfectly clean.

2209. That is the difference in the soil. It would not be so in Suffolk?—It was quite clean.

Wages.

2210. Are the wages that you spoke of, paying about the rate that your neighbours pay too, or are they exceptional the per 12*s.* week at the present time to the ordinary labourer?—The neighbours pay mostly 1*s.* less than we do.

2211. Have wages gone down in the last year?—About 1*s.*; and they said that they would be down a good deal this winter, but I have not heard of much reduction beyond 1*s.*

2212. Have you many men out of work?—Not many just now.

Duty on barley.

2213. You spoke in referring to the fall in the price of barley, of the change when the duty was transferred from the malt to the beer, which as you know was a change that farmers very much desired to have made. I want to know why you attribute the fall in barley to that, when you have the fact that wheat has fallen a good deal more than barley?—It has done, but what I meant was, the best malting barley in old times would fetch 10*s.* more than a poor sample, and now that is done away with because they will not give a very high price now. When they paid duty upon the barley, it paid them to pay for the better article at a high price. I remember saying to Mr. Read when he was advocating the change, that it would spoil the price of their best barley, and he said, "Oh, yes, but it will help our "Norfolk barley, our second quality barley would be "worth more." It might do that because the duty on barley was heavy, and when they got a real good strong barley that pleased them, they gave a very high price for it, because it produced more beer than the lesser barley.

2214. What struck me is this. We have the fact, I believe, that taking all the products of the farm, barley is the one which has suffered least by the fall in prices?—It has.

2215. And it seemed very strange that when you are in the presence of a universal fall you attribute the fall in that article which has fallen the least, to the change which Mr. Gladstone made when he transferred the malt tax?—We have also another reason for its keeping up. The imported barley does not answer the purposes of the brewer like our own growth.

2216. But still as a fact of all the leading products—wool, wheat, and barley—barley is the one which has fallen the least?—Yes, that is true.

2217. Would not you consider that the fall in barley is part of the fall which has come to all other products rather than singling out that and attributing a special cause to it?—Yes. I was only thinking of the very best quality of barley. You do not get very much more for the very best than for the medium as we used to do.

Uncultivated land.

2218. We do in our county as a matter of fact. If prices continue to fall in the next 12 months as they have done since you gave evidence before the Duke of Richmond's Commission, do you think that very much of the land of England can be kept in cultivation?—I do not think so. Only spots here and there could be cultivated at all, unless you get very much cheaper labour and many other things to help to qualify it.

2219. (*Lord Vernon.*) Am I not right in saying that all tenants pay their rents three months after it is due; they all have three months?—That is the case on some estates; on others for over 30 years the custom was six months' notice.

Law of distress.

2220, If the law of distress was abolished the tenant would have to pay on the day?—They would have to pay on the day or very near it. Where a man gets six months he is 12 months on his farm before any rent is asked from him, and, if he had to pay it on the day it might be awkward for him, supposing there were 300 acres and 300*l.* to pay he would be much poorer for the half of the year up to Michaelmas than he is now under the present conditions.

2221. So that in some ways the abolition of the law of distress would be a disadvantage to the tenants?—It would be a disadvantage to the tenants.

2222. When you spoke of the tenants whom you think owe a good deal of money to banks, or did, have you any idea what sort of rate of interest they paid for advances on their stock?—I think it mostly runs to about 5 per cent.

Mortgages on land.

2223. Do you have anything to do with the mortgages on the land itself. I mean do you pay the interest of any mortgages on land that you have the management of?—I have nothing to do with it, but I have some experience of it in this way. A tenant thought he would better his position by buying 500 acres of land adjoining his farm, and he bought it and mortgaged it for about two-thirds of the price that he paid for it, and these bad times came and ruined him.

2224. Because, I suppose, being over mortgaged he could not pay the rate of interest?—He was obliged to pay 4 per cent. He could go to the landlord for a reduction, but he could not go to the mortgagee for a reduction, so that the land became too dear.

2225. (*Chairman.*) You have known a case of that kind?—Yes.

2226. More than one?—Only one case.

2227. (*Lord Vernon.*) Are the larger estates that you have to manage mortgaged much?—None of them.

2228. You have no experience of that at all?—Not one bit.

2229. Have you borrowed much money from the Lands Improvement Companies for works and buildings and things of that kind?—When I was agent for Sir Harry Verney I borrowed a little for drainage, but not much. They had done a great deal of that before I went there, and I thought it was over burdened, and it was better not to go deeper into it. But that has been paid off, and he has lived to see it cleared.

2230. If the landlords you have had to do with had insisted upon their rights many farms would have been tenantless?—Certainly, because there are no tenants coming in at a very low rent. You cannot get men in business, they will not venture on the land now. They used to be pressing up if there was any vacant, and you would always get offers from such people, but there are not any now, and the farmers themselves have not the money to cultivate all the land if a good many were to go out at once.

2231. As a matter of fact, if the land of the employer you have to do with had been mortgaged the landlord would not have been able to reduce the rent, but would have had to insist upon his rights?—Or else something would happen; he could not keep up a heavy mortgage. One person that I was agent for was obliged to give up his land to trustees and the management entirely removed it from his hand as well as mine. The burdens were more than it could bear.

2232. Do not you think that a great deal of the difficulties of agriculture arise from the mortgaging of land for more than its value?—Yes, perhaps it is. I know a landlord with a heavy mortgage would be in a bad position to deal with his tenants these bad times.

Position of tenants in Dorset.

2233. (*Chairman.*) You said that the Dorset tenants had done well until two years ago?—Yes.

2234. And there was a demand for farms there?—There was a very good demand.

2235. Then the two last years have told upon them very much?—Yes they had no hay in 1892 at all, or very little, and they had a little old hay which helped them up. One man told me that if he had made a present to somebody of all his cows in the winter he would have been richer in the spring.

2236. They have suffered mainly from the bad seasons?—Yes; and this one has come upon them very heavily.

2237. But apart from these last two years they have not been badly treated by the seasons?—No, they did not complain of the prices.

2238. Besides that, you said they work themselves?—They do.

2239. What do you mean by that?—I have found the wife milking and the daughter milking the cows, and the man away mowing his hay.

Farmers in Oxfordshire.

2240. And that is not the case with your own farmers in Oxfordshire?—No.

2241. They are a different class of farmers?—Yes.

2242. They have been merely managers and do not work themselves?—Mostly.

2243. Among the Oxfordshire farmers, are there some who have done better than others during the last few years?—Yes, and you can hardly tell the reason; it does not appear in the difference of the land, or in the difference of the capabilities of the land.

2244. There are some who have done well?—Some have been able to keep their own. They all complain.

2245. Some have done better than others?—Yes.

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2246. And you cannot assign any reason for it?—You can say that a man who had plenty of capital could take advantage of the markets when things are cheap; he can buy animals that pay a good bit of money, and makes up for other losses.

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2247. And men with capital, therefore, have done better?—Yes, and we have had a great advantage in having very little disease among our stock: for the last few years things have gone very well with us for them.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till Thursday next at 12 o'clock.

Sixth Day.

Thursday, 30th November 1893.

PRESENT:

The RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. Baron VERNON.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.

FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
FREEMAN THOMAS, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON called and examined.

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2248. (*Chairman.*) You come here on behalf of the Cleveland Chamber of Agriculture?—Yes.

2249. And at the invitation of the Central Chamber of Agriculture?—Yes.

2250. Is the Cleveland Chamber of Agriculture an important body?—It covers a wide district of Yorkshire, it has perhaps 160 members at the present time.

System of agriculture in the district.

2251. What is the agriculture of the district, is it mainly grass?—No, it varies, I should say two-thirds arable would be about the proportion.

2252. What is it generally?—Strong clay mostly, varying to strong loam.

2253. Is there much wheat grown in the district?—Not nearly so much as there was; 30 years ago wheat was the principal cereal grown; now, I do not suppose that half so much is grown.

2254. Has the land been laid down in grass or is it devoted to other cereals?—Some of it is laid down to grass, but that is a small proportion; another proportion is left in temporary grass. Barley has taken its place to a great extent, and oats are grown.

2255. What has been the experience of the district during the last 12 years?—As to what?

Profits and products.

2256. As to the profits of farming?—As a rule I should say profits have vanished, and during the last two or three years crops have been rather better on account of better seasons, though they did fall off very much during the bad seasons that we experienced for about a decade.

Bad seasons.

2257. When were the bad seasons that you speak of?—I do not think that we really began to experience the very bad seasons so early as they did in the south. 1879 was the worst year when the bad seasons really set in so far as climatic considerations took effect.

2258. How long did the bad seasons last?—Up to about three or four years ago when we had rather better seasons so far as the crops are concerned.

2259. Then in the last two years you have not suffered as the farmers in the south have done, from the drought?—Not to the same extent, we have suffered this year considerably, but not to the extent that they have in the south.

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Low prices and foreign competition.

2260. What is the opinion of the Cleveland farmers on the agricultural depression?—They consider that it is principally owing to the low prices for everything almost that they produce.

2261. And to what do they attribute that?—Mostly to foreign competition, and to a certain extent to bad trade. I might preface what I am saying, by the statement that we are in the midst of a large iron-producing district where we do from time to time feel the fluctuations of the iron trade very considerably.

2262. Then you have suffered locally from the bad trade of the district?—Yes, that has something to do with it.

2263. And aggravated during the last year by the drought, I suppose?—That is so.

Local rates.

2264. What other subjects of complaint have you?—I think most of our members in the Chamber believe that the question of rates has a very considerable bearing upon the question; they feel that they press very unduly on land.

2265. Will you express their opinion on that subject?—They consider that a great many of the burdens on land, ought to come on the whole property of the kingdom, that what are local burdens, should be made Imperial charges; they consider that the Poor Rate, the maintenance of highways, and the police and the administration of the Education and Sanitary Acts, should be borne by every description of property in the country. They consider also, that most of those changes are not for the benefit of real property alone, and that they are not created by the owners of real property; further they consider that a good many of those imposts on land, were established when land had certain privileges which it has not now. The produce of the land at that time was protected, and was better able to bear a great many of those burdens. Seeing that these exemptions have disappeared, we consider that there ought to be a re-adjustment of the whole question of local taxation.

Adulteration.

2266. Then what other matters have you to complain of?—With reference to the question of adulteration, agriculture has suffered, no doubt to a great extent by the adulteration of manures and feeding stuffs. The dairy industry suffers to a great extent by the sale of margarine as butter; farming also suffers by foreign meat being sold as English. We also complain that various substitutes for malt, barley, and hops, are used in brewing, and that the beer is sold as beer without any distinction. We also consider that in the past, we have suffered very much from imported diseases amongst our cattle, our flocks and herds.

Importation of live stock.

2267. You say you have suffered "in the past" from imported diseases; may we assume, therefore, that you do not mean at the present moment?—Not to the same extent. We consider that at present, there is a danger of suffering again; the danger is always present with us.

2268. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What is the danger?—The danger is that of importing cattle disease.

2269. (*Chairman.*) Then do you think that the importation of live stock should be prohibited?—Personally, I am in favour of its being prohibited altogether.

2270. You say "personally"; is that your own view, or is it generally the view of your club?—Some of those whom I represent, do not go quite so far as that. They say that all live cattle should be slaughtered at the port of landing, while I personally would go absolutely for prohibition of the import of live cattle, for even with slaughter at the port of landing, I think there is a certain amount of danger.

2271. You are in favour of prohibiting all import of live cattle?—That is it.

2272. You would allow the import, I presume, of dead meat?—Yes. In my opinion we could not prevent that, we do not ask for it.

2273. With regard to the suggested remedies, what have you to say?—There is one other point in my proof relating to the causes of the depression, in fact two. In some branches of farming I say that the producer does not receive his fair proportion of what the consumer pays; in other words the middlemen get an undue proportion. That only refers to some branches.

2274. To what branches does that refer?—To fruit and vegetable growing principally and to the dairy industry to a certain extent, but nothing like the extent that it does to the others.

2275. It is mainly in fruit and vegetables, is it?—Yes, and produce of that kind.

2276. Where the markets are somewhat limited, or where the markets are close?—Where the bulk of the business is done through commission agents or through middlemen.

Railway rates.

2277. With regard to railway rates and charges, what do you say?—Many of us believe that we are still handicapped by the charges made on farmers; we say that up till now, and to a certain extent even now, the charges and the services rendered are in favour of our foreign rivals.

Reduction of rent.

2278. Will you go on to the suggested remedies?—The first remedy which would naturally occur to every one would be a reduction of rent to meet the altered circumstances of farming where that has not already taken place. In many cases, I am happy to say, the landowners have met their tenants fairly, and in other cases they have not yet done so.

2279. When you say that that is a remedy how do you propose that it should be enforced?—I cannot suggest any way of enforcing it; it can only be left to public opinion and the sense of fairness, and the necessity of the case, which must in a very short time enforce reductions, tenants not being able to pay the rent they have paid in the past. I may at once say that I do not in any way advocate any tribunal for fixing rents.

2280. Has that question been discussed in your Chamber of Agriculture?—It has, and the feeling against any such tribunal has been most emphatic.

2281. When did the reduction of rents begin in your district?—I should say early in the eighties.

2282. By early in the eighties do you mean shortly after 1879?—Yes, that was the year that the depression began to be most acutely felt. Of course it has been aggravated since then, and in some cases soon after that permanent reductions were made, and in other cases temporary abatements were allowed and are still allowed and in some cases those abatements and reductions have been increased very materially.

2283. Can you give any idea of the average reduction of rents in your district?—I do not think, taking North Yorkshire, that the average may amount to 18 per cent., certainly not to 20 per cent. I have no figures to prove that.

2284. What is the size of your farm?—320 acres.

2285. And have you had your holding for some years?—Rather more than 20 years.

2286. What reduction in rent has been effected there?—10 per cent.

2287. Only 10 per cent?—Only 10 per cent., and I say that one half of that reduction is discounted by the increase in rates, fully half of that. I may say that considerable sums have been expended on the farm in buildings and other improvements which I partly look upon as equivalent to a reduction in rent.

Rent per acre.

2288. What does the rent average per acre now?—36*s.* an acre.

2289. Is that an arable farm?—It is two-thirds arable.

2290. Whereabouts is it?—Within three miles of Middlesbrough, a large town.

2291. I presume the rent is high owing to the nearness to a large town?—There is no doubt that has something to do with it. It would not be worth the rent if it were 20 miles further from the town.

2292. Do I gather that you have no complaint in respect of your rent?—I am not altogether satisfied with it, I must say.

2293. But I think you said there was a reduction, and that there were others less favourably situated in that respect?—I say for the last few years I have not been satisfied; with prices lowering ever year it is getting more impossible to make ends meet.

Abatements.

2294. Have there been temporary abatements in addition to a reduction of rent in your case?—None whatever.

Tithe.

2295. Do you pay the tithe?—A small tithe; it only practically amounts to from 1*s.* to 2*s.*; a little more than 1*s.* an acre.

2296. After the tithe was commuted did the landlord take the tithe?—Yes; I still pay it, but directly to the landlord instead of to the vicar.

2297. And that has been enforced?—I never tried to get rid of it. I should look upon getting rid of it in that way as a refusal to pay part of the rent, and in fairness I could not ask for it.

Reduction of rent.

2298. Then you do not think there is any mode of enforcing reductions of rent?—I cannot suggest any.

2299. The feeling of your Chamber of Commerce is against any legislation on the subject?—Almost unanimously.

Rates.

2300. What do they suggest with regard to the rates?—In the first place the question has been many times before our Chamber and in every case the Chamber has carried a resolution that all rates should be divided between the owner and occupier.

2301. That was the opinion of the Chamber?—Yes, of the majority in the Chamber. Shall I give any reasons for that.

2302. Yes?—We naturally look upon rates to a certain extent as rent, and when a farm is taken no doubt the amount of rates is considered in the rent which a tenant would offer; but we all know that from time to time rates do increase; there is a tendency always for rates to increase. From time to time fresh rates are imposed upon a farm, and they come on so imperceptibly that the tenant does not every time have his rent re-adjusted to meet it. In my own case I should say that the increase in the rates amounts to an increase of rent of really 2*s.* an acre. It has been done a little at a time, bit by bit, and I have never felt myself quite in a position in regard to any particular rate to ask to have the rent re-adjusted to that amount.

2303. What is the total of the rates in the pound now in your parish?—I have only worked it out for the last eight years in my own case. It amounts to 4*s.* 1½*d.* per acre or 2*s.* 7½*d.* in the pound.

2304. (*Mr. Everett.*) What are you assessed at per acre?—The net assessment I pay on is 504*l.*, that is rather less than the rent.

2305. (*Chairman.*) I thought I understood you that the rates had increased 2*s.* in the pound?—About 2*s.*

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per acre. I may say by way of explanation that at the time I took the farm I was in a purely rural union where they had a very low assessment and where the rates were very low indeed. Some years ago a new union was formed for Middlesborough to which my township was added and the rates increased enormously.

2306. Did it become an urban district ?—No. We are outside the borough of Middlesborough. We are in a rural sanitary district still, but it is a much more expensive union than the union I was in.

2307. It has been transferred from a purely rural union to a partly urban union ?—Yes.

2308. And in consequence the rates have been increased ?—Very considerably.

2309. Before then the rates were really low ?—Very moderate.

2310. 2*s*. an acre you said, that would be 1*s*. 3½*d*. in the pound ?—That is somewhere about the amount. Since that time a sanitary rate has been imposed which was not the case in the old union.

2311. Do you derive no benefit from the subventions of the State in aid of local rates ?—To a certain extent, but only to a small amount.

2312. Not much ?—Not very much. I have not worked it out; but it does not work out to very much.

2313. Speaking of the district generally, have they the benefit of low rates in consequence of being in the rural district or not ? — Several of the unions adjoining are very high. There is a very large iron stone mining population, and the rates are high—there are so many accidents occurring at the works, that men with large families are thrown upon the rates, and the poor-rates are always high in several of the unions in the country districts. There are one or two purely agricultural unions where they are still moderate comparatively speaking.

3214. Then you think the rates should be divided equally between the owners and occupiers ?—Yes, for one reason that we consider that it is only fair that the owner should bear his proportion of that increase. Another reason is that in many cases the owner would take a livelier interest in local affairs; and seeing that most of the rates are imposed by landowners as a class, rather than by occupiers, they would perhaps be more careful in imposing fresh burdens upon the land.

2315. How are they imposed more by owners than by occupiers ?—Very few occupiers are members of Parliament; a good many owners are.

2316. You mean through the influence of Parliament ?—Yes; the occupier has no option in the matter, but the owner has in many cases.

2317. I understood you to admit that in the long run the rates are a matter of adjustment in the rent ?—At the commencement of the tenancy.

2318. But that there is a difficulty in re-adjusting the rates from time to time ?—That is the principal reason.

Local taxation.

2319. What is your next proposal ?—We consider that the whole question of local taxation should be considered in a comprehensive manner with the object, if possible, of legislating so that land should bear only a fair proportion of the burdens. We consider that so many of the charges that come on real property are so essentially Imperial charges that it seems almost incredible that they should be levied on one description of property alone. I believe, as an instance, that shipping bears almost no portion of the expense.

2320. I presume from what you have already said that from the commencement of the tenancy the adjustment does not take place, and therefore that it would be the landlord who would gain the benefit ?—To a great extent. At the same time I think if there were fewer burdens upon land many owners would feel more able to meet their tenants in the matter of rent. If what I suggested ever becomes law I still think and hope that the tenants would receive some of the benefit from it.

2321. At all events the tenants who are in possession of continuing tenancies would receive the benefit ?—Certainly they would.

2322. Then in times of falling rent you think that there the tenant would derive some benefit because the landlord would be in a better position to make reductions ?—Decidedly so.

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Agricultural Holdings Act.

2323. Then with regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act, what have you to say ?—There is a sort of general feeling in the Chamber which I represent that the Act has to some extent been a failure; that it has not had altogether the effect that was hoped and intended that it should have.

2324. In what respect has it failed ?—It is the opinion of the majority of the Chamber, and it is most strongly my own opinion, that the failure has been more in the carrying out of the Act than in the Act itself. At the same time there are two or three points in which I think that the Act might be improved.

2325. Before we come to those, as regards the carrying out of the Act rather than the principle of the Act, am I to understand from you that the main principle on which the Act was founded is the right one ?—Mainly, it meets with my approval.

Arbitration under the Act.

2326. With regard to the expense of valuations what do you say ?—That is one great objection, the great expense of an arbitration or a reference under the Act.

2327. What do you suggest might be the remedy for that ?—It is difficult to say, except that there should be a provision in the Act that it should be simpler. It seems to me in many cases that a single arbitrator appointed at once would meet the case. It generally results in that at the finish. It is very rarely that the two arbitrators agree, and an umpire has to be appointed. In many cases the present procedure is very unnecessary. Lawyers are called in, and a great many witnesses examined who might be dispensed with; and I think in many cases a single arbitrator might settle the case much more simply without calling so many witnesses.

2328. How should that arbitrator be appointed ?—He must be appointed by mutual agreement, I suppose.

2329. Really they are left to appoint an arbitrator as they like ?—They are. I do not see how the fault is to be remedied. It is, no doubt, the way the Act is carried out; but still, at the same time, I cannot quite see how it is to be remedied.

2330. Do you wish to see arbitrators nominated by an external authority ?—I do not think, as a tenant farmer, I should like to advocate that. I should like to have a voice in the appointment myself.

Compensation for high farming.

2331. What are the points which you suggest as amendments to the principle of the Act ?—As to one point there seems to be no provision in the Act for awarding extra compensation for continuous high and good farming. It is a fact that a tenant who has been only three years in occupation of his farm, and using a large quantity of cake or imported manures, would receive as much compensation as a man who had been farming highly for 23 years. A farmer who had been in occupation for that length of time, and using cake continually on his pasture, must by that time have materially increased the letting value of that land. It is a permanent improvement, and yet according to the way the Act is administered, he would not receive a penny for that outlay more than a man who had been only three years in occupation. I, as an incoming tenant, would much rather pay compensation to a man who had been farming high for 20 years, than to a man who had been farming for only three years. I should consider that I should have better value for the amount I paid in compensation.

2332. Have you any specific proposal on that point ?—My objection has been met, by saying the Act provides that tenants should be compensated for anything which adds to the letting value of the farm. There is no doubt that improvement of grass land by long consumption of cake, must add to the letting value of the land; but I scarcely know a case where any arbitrator has awarded more really than a sum proportionate to the consumption of cake for the last two years. I have one case in point, it was not a very large case, where the arbitrator did make a special award of a small sum for long continued consumption of cake. At the same time he told me that he expected it would be appealed against, and if it had been appealed against that his award would have been reversed by the county court judge, but it has so happened that no appeal was made. It is the only case I know of in which any increased compensation has been given for that long consumption of cake.

Arbitration under the Act.

2333. Is it your opinion that under the Act the arbitrators have no real power to award anything for the long continued consumption of cake on the farm ?

—I do not know whether they are absolutely precluded by the Act, but they always seem only to take the last two or three years' consumption into account.

2334. Have you had a legal opinion upon that point, because it is an extremely important one?—No, I have not.

2335. But if it be the law the arbitrators do not take advantage of it, as I understand?—No, or to a very small extent.

2336. You know only one case?—Only one case.

Official valuers.

2337. Can you suggest the actual amendment of the Act that is required in this respect, it is very important to know what the recommendation is?—I should like the Commission to emphasise more particularly that any act of husbandry that adds to the letting value of the farm should be considered on its own merit. One member of our Chamber has made a suggestion year by year. I do not know whether it is quite practicable, I am afraid it may not be on account of the expense which it would entail. He maintains that there ought to be a body of inspectors appointed who should periodically from time to time make a report on the condition of every farm; that they should make periodical inspection at three or five years' intervals and keep a record. His contention is that that would enable the arbitrators to know what the incoming tenant would have to pay to the outgoing tenant.

2338. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Whom will the inspectors be appointed by and to whom will they report?—They would have to be appointed by the Board of Agriculture. I do not put it forward as my own opinion, but merely as the opinion of a member of our Chamber.

2339. (*Chairman.*) Do you consider it a practical proposal or not in your own opinion?—I am afraid the expense would almost make it impracticable.

2340. The idea being that at so many years' interval those inspectors should go about and record their opinion?—Yes, there would be a record kept of their opinion; and the contention of this gentleman is that an arbitrator would have some data to go upon as to how far the farm had been improved.

2341. But you do not put forward that proposal on your own behalf?—No.

2342. You feel a difficulty as to the expense?—I have always felt that difficulty.

Compensation for home grown corn.

2343. Are there any other points arising out of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—There is another point as to whether compensation should be allowed for home grown corn consumed on the occupation. That question has been before our Chamber more than once, but I think the majority have been against the proposal. It was felt that it would add very greatly to the difficulty of assessing the compensation, and that it might open the door to misstatement.

2344. Then you do not recommend that yourself?—I scarcely press that.

Improvements by tenants.

2345. Is there any other point on the Act you wish to speak of?—There is another point, and that is with regard to the first part of the first Schedule in the Act, as to improvements which can only be made with the consent of the owner. There are cases in which an owner is quite unable to make those improvements himself, and at the same time he might not allow his tenants to make them. I do not, and we do not, at all wish to say that a tenant should be allowed to make any improvements of that sort without his landlord's consent, but I do think that there should be some tribunal (or a reference in the way provided under the Act), by which it might be considered whether those improvements, such as buildings, which are really necessary to have, would add to the letting value, and whether they should be allowed for if executed by the tenant. I certainly think where the owner is not willing or not able to make those improvements such as buildings, or laying down land to grass, at his own expense, and refuses his tenant consent, there should be some means by which a tenant might have an opportunity of doing that at his own expense, and receiving compensation. I think it ought to be embodied in the Act that a reference should be held as provided under the Act for ascertaining whether the tenant ought to be allowed to make those improvements.

2346. What class of improvements should that apply to?—The first part of the first Schedule.

2347. To all of them?—More or less; buildings is the principal thing, then road making, water supply and laying down land to permanent pasture.

2348. Do I understand you that these improvements should be brought about on the same principle as drainage in the second part of the Act?—No, I would not go so far as that, because drainage you can do by only giving notice. I do not consider that it would be fair to the owner that those improvements should come under the second part of the Act; but there should be provision made that where the owner would not make them, the question should be fought out as to whether it was reasonable that they should be made, and in that case the arbitrator would give his consent to the tenant doing them as under Part 2, he does with respect to the drainage.

2349. Under Part 2 in the case of drainage the tenant has power to give notice to the landlord of his intention to drain?—Yes.

2350. And if the landlord does not execute the tenant may do it himself and get compensation?—Yes.

2351. There is no intervention of any third party to say whether the drainage is expedient or not. I understand that you would apply the same principle to improvements under Part 1, with this addition that some officer of the State, or some arbitrator, would say whether the intended improvement is a benefit or not?—Yes, in the case of a particular tenant the particular way in which he carries on his business might require buildings which would be quite useless for a future tenant. I think it would be very unfair that an owner should be saddled with the cost of those buildings. But what I say is if they are reasonably required for the cultivation of the farm there should be some means of getting them.

2352. And that would be determined at the time by some independent authority?—Yes.

2353. By an officer of the Board of Agriculture or by an arbitrator to be jointly appointed?—Yes. I want to press for a provision in the Act for that being done.

2354. And if that independent authority were to say that the intended improvement would add to the value of the farm then the tenant should be permitted to make it and to claim compensation for it on the termination of his tenancy?—That is so.

2355. But you would not extend that to the case of buildings which, although necessary for the particular business of the farmer, might not be valuable to the landlord himself, or to any future tenant?—Decidedly not. The arbitrator would take that into consideration and say whether it was or not.

Counter claims.

2356. Is there any other point under the Act that you wish to speak about?—The question has arisen from time to time as to whether the items of a counter-claim should be scheduled or not. My own Chamber has not expressed a very decided opinion on that point, and I am not prepared to press that point.

2357. Is there any point on which you have made up your mind?—These two points that I have mentioned are the main amendments I would suggest to-day.

Margarine Act.

2358. On other matters, what further remedies have you to suggest?—In the first place I think that the Margarine Act should be strengthened and its provisions strongly enforced. It is probably well known there has been a Margarine Committee appointed by the Central Chamber of Agriculture, which has consulted from time to time with various members of Parliament with the object of bringing in a Bill to meet that. I am a member of that committee, and we most of us feel that the present Margarine Act is almost entirely a dead letter. The Act is weak in itself, and it is very imperfectly carried out; its provisions are in many cases not carried out at all. By the report issued recently by the Board of Trade we still find that there are a great many counties and boroughs that have never enforced any Adulteration Act at all. The list is not quite so long as last year's, but there is still very great room for improvement. We consider that it requires a much more stringent Act than the present one. I feel that it is necessary that it should be enforced by a central authority.

2359. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You said the Board of Trade just now; what do you mean by that?—I referred to the returns published by the Board of Trade, as to the enforcement of these Acts, the Margarine Act and the Food and Drugs Act. In many localities no analyses of articles of food have been made during the year.

2360. I do not think that that is Board of Trade business?—The Board of Trade publish those returns.

Railway rates.

2361. (*Chairman.*) Then you desire some cheap tribunal for settling disputes between farmers and railway companies?—Yes, we are not satisfied with the rates charged and the services rendered. It is quite impossible for a single farmer, or even bodies of farmers, to take any case before the Railway Commissioners at present. We consider that there should be some cheap tribunal to which any farmer or any trader who had a grievance, or who considered he was not fairly treated, should be able to go at a very moderate expense.

2362. Are you referring to the increased rates made by the railway companies during the past year?—Partly to that. I may say that we are not altogether satisfied that English farmers are quite on a par with foreigners.

2363. Your complaints have reference to the undue preference?—To a certain extent.

2364. The undue preference shown by railway companies to foreign imports?—We have not specific cases, but in the case of many large cattle dealers and others they think that there is a system of rebates allowed in many cases to foreigners.

2365. Have you any specific case?—We know also—I think it came out in the evidence that was taken before the Railway Committee—that while as a rule 5 per cent. increase has been put on English grain, the 5 per cent. increase has not been enforced in any case from any seaport town.

2366. That is an increased rate since the beginning of the year?—Yes.

2367. But I was asking with reference to other complaints than those referring to the action of the railway companies during the present year?—It refers to the present year. There is the case of the railway companies withdrawing the drover's pass; that adds about 4 per cent. to the rate at which the cattle are carried.

2368. I was anxious to know with reference to complaints, other than those within the present year?—We have not specific complaints, except that we have always felt that foreign produce was treated better than our own, both in the facilities given to the foreigners, and also in the lower rates.

2369. That is a question where undue preference is shown to certain trades?—We felt that. Now we are expecting that that will be remedied by the recent Act, but we are not satisfied that we are on a par.

2370. That you have got full satisfaction in that respect?—Yes.

2371. (*Lord Cobham.*) If you can prove it you can succeed?—The difficulty is to prove it. It would be almost impossible to prove it. I do not think that any man who gets a rebate, if he does, would come forward and say so.

State loans.

2372. (*Chairman.*) Then with regard to the loans by the State to landowners, for the purpose of effecting improvements on their estates, what have you to suggest?—The question has been before my Chamber from time to time. It was felt, seeing that the State was empowered to lend money at a very low rate of interest for the purpose of small holdings, that it was not unreasonable that the State should advance money on the same terms for the purpose of larger holdings. It is pretty generally known of late years that many owners are absolutely unable to make the necessary improvements on their estates. There is an enormous acreage of land that requires drainage, and where the buildings are quite inadequate to the requirements of the farmer. Owing to the reduced rents which many owners get—they practically have no income left—it is quite impossible that they should carry out those improvements. We feel that in a case of that sort the State should be allowed to advance money at a low rate of interest to the landowners, specifying that the tenants should not have to pay a higher rate of interest than the landowners. In many cases it would add to the letting value of the land quite as much as would pay the rate of interest that would be necessary.

2373. Taking your own district, the Cleveland district, should you say that the landlords have been unable to effect improvements largely?—Not many of them. A great many of them have valuable ironstone under their property which has enormously increased the value of their property. But still there are landowners in Cleveland who are not able to spend any money on their estates.

2374. Is there a large amount of land in that district which is capable of being drained, and which ought to be drained?—There is some; not so much as in some other districts of Yorkshire.

2375. Are there farms where money might be advantageously expended in buildings?—Yes, not so many in Cleveland, but there are in parts of Yorkshire. In my own case I am willing to pay the interest on money that might be profitably expended, but I cannot get it done.

2376. Is your landlord unable to spend the money?—At the present time he is. Up to a short time ago he was able, and did spend a considerable amount in improvements, but at the present time the trustees are not able to do that, and improvements have come to a standstill. I was having drainage done for which I paid a reasonable interest, but it had to come to a standstill.

2377. You pay the full amount which was required, but you cannot get on with the improvements which have been commenced owing to the want of capital?—Yes, the amount of interest which I was charged was a private arrangement.

2378. Then you think that there is a good deal to be done in that direction both for landowners and for farmers?—It was felt so by most of the members of our Chamber and the question was considered more than once. We pressed the question to be taken up by the Central Chamber of Agriculture, and a resolution in favour of it was adopted—I cannot say that it was fully considered—but still a resolution was adopted by the Central Chamber of Agriculture.

2379. Do you think that the State money should be lent at a low rate of interest; I presume 3 per cent.?—Yes.

2380. Do you think that there will be a considerable demand for it?—I think in some districts there would be.

2381. In your district, would there?—Not so much as in others, because most of the owners are able to make these improvements themselves and do make them. It is to meet the circumstances of those who have not the money.

Reductions and abatements of rent.

2382. The reduction of rent has not been very heavy in your district and therefore the landowners have not suffered so much as in other districts?—There have been some very liberal landlords, not so much in the way of reductions, but temporary abatements; they have been very liberal in many cases.

2383. But those abatements have not been permanent?—In many cases there have been permanent reductions too, but I think that in the preponderance of cases there have been abatements.

2384. The 15 per cent. you said was the average?—I intended that to cover both permanent reductions and abatements.

2385. To cover both?—Yes, except special abatements this year.

Uncultivated land.

2386. Is there any land out of cultivation?—I do not know of any farm.

Land in hand.

2387. Has much land been taken in hand by the owners?—Yes, but most of it might have found tenants at a reasonable rent. I know very few farms which could not find tenants at a reasonable rent.

Demand for farms.

2388. Is there a demand for farms in your district at a reasonable rent?—Yes; I believe the last year or two land agents have had less difficulty in letting their farms than they had a few years ago.

2389. By reasonable rent do you mean with considerable reductions from the average rent of the district or not?—In some cases there would be considerable reductions.

2390. Is that on the ground that the farms are in bad order?—Partly so. As a rule what I am saying refers to farms which are not very advantageously situated or where from some cause or other there is not the same competition for them that there is for others.

Wages.

2391. What have been the wages in your district; have they risen or fallen?—They have been about stationary for the last four or five years. There is a slight tendency to reduce them at the present time. I do not hear of any man asking his old servants to take

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less, but where there has been a change the wages have been slightly lowered.

2392. But before the period you speak of what was the tendency then?—Wages have fluctuated several times during the last 20 years. About 1875 they got to the highest pitch and they remained at a high level for two or three years, and then they were gradually reduced. About 1886 they began to rise again. I may say that our wages are not altogether ruled by the condition of agriculture, but by the state of the outside labour market. A great many of our men in good times—when trade is good—go to the ironstone mines or other public works and when trade is slack they drift back to farm work again.

2393. In 1876 you said wages reached the highest point?—In 1875 or 1876.

2394. Then they fell again after that?—Yes, for some years.

2395. Till 1882 and 1883 and then they rose again?—Yes; perhaps in 1885 and 1886 they began to rise again.

2396. Did they reach the highest point in 1875?—No, some shillings a week short of that. I may say that they are still high in comparison with most districts in England.

2397. Then I understand from you that the depression began in your district in 1879?—Yes, it began then to be severe.

Low prices.

2398. And that since then it has been due partly to bad produce and partly to low prices?—Mainly to the low prices.

Reduction of rents.

2399. And that the rents have decreased on the average about 15 per cent?—Yes.

2400. Looking further back do you recollect before that, that there had been a rise of rents?—About 1873, so far as I remember, or about that time, the rents were the highest—in 1873, 1874, and 1875 rents had increased.

2401. How much did they increase?—I am not prepared to say what the increase was, or to what extent.

2402. Had rents gone down to the lowest point before that increase?—Scarcely.

Characteristics of farm.

2403. (*Lord Cobham.*) What is the character of the land on your farm?—A very strong clay—to strong loam.

2404. Is it good useful land or cold land?—A good deal of it is cold clay, with mostly a cold subsoil.

Rent per acre.

2405. And the rent is 36*s.* per acre?—Yes.

2406. Do you agree with me in thinking that that is considerably higher than a similar farm could possibly command in the South or Midland part of England?—I am certain that in some districts in England it would not command more than 20*s.*

2407. And you pay a higher rate of wages?—A higher rate per week. I do not say that it amounts to a higher rate per acre.

2408. How do you account for the rents ruling so high as you get towards the North of England as compared with the South and the Midlands?—One reason is that it is nearer the centres of population.

2409. But I have in my mind similar districts in the Midlands where there is a very large population close by, and there is nothing like the same rents to be had. Could you give any other explanation?—It is rather difficult to say.

2410. And at the same time you have a lesser amount of reduction of rent?—I think one reason may be that in the district I am speaking of the tenants are allowed more to cultivate as they like. They have facilities for selling produce which numbers of farmers in the Midlands have not.

Free sale.

2411. Are you allowed to take your straw and hay into Middlesborough?—Practically I sell what I like and farm as I like.

2412. Notwithstanding any covenants there may be; or are there no covenants against such a practice?—By my agreement I am allowed a considerable latitude in this respect and practically I enjoy a still wider one, for when I took my farm 20 years ago I gave a higher offer on that account; because of being allowed to dispose of the produce. At that time I may say it was not so common as it is now. To some extent I might say that I had then a partial monopoly for the sale of produce and was able to get a higher price and now through bad seasons, and other farmers having been allowed to do the same—I do not say that they have been allowed by agreement, but they have been allowed to sell their produce—it makes the concession to me not worth so much as it was. Now in many cases a man paying the ordinary rent is allowed to sell what he likes.

2413. Do you find the sale of straw very advantageous?—At one time it was.

2414. What sort of price do you get for straw one year with another at Middlesborough?—It varies considerably. A year or two ago it could not be sold at 30*s.*, now wheat straw is worth 70*s.*

2415. (*Mr. Little.*) By the load?—Per ton.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

2416. (*Lord Cobham.*) With regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act your suggestion would rather tend to increase the amount that incoming tenants would have to pay in future?—It would.

2417. Are you of opinion that incoming tenants in the North are perfectly able and willing to pay heavy sums on taking over their farms?—There are not so many farms I am afraid where there could be much claim for compensation. It is on comparatively few farms where there would be any large amount of compensation to pay. I think the tenants for those farms would be willing to pay the compensation.

2418. You think that they could bear the burden?—On those farms where the claims could be enforced I think they would be.

2419. And it would not hinder the letting of the farms?—I do not see why it should. I personally would rather pay a moderate compensation to a man who had expended a large amount on his farm than follow a man who had not expended anything. I should be in pocket by paying a moderate amount.

2420. Would you let the arbitrator decide the question of the improved letting value?—Yes, it would give him more latitude than he would have at present.

2421. Of course, you are aware that in many parts of England there are considerable improvements in the condition of land on farms taking place, and yet they stand at a reduced letting value?—But the reduction in the letting value would be much greater if those improvements had not been made.

2422. The fall would not have been so great?—The fall would have been greater.

2423. Notwithstanding the diminished letting value the landlord would still have to make full compensation?—Yes; the fall would have been greater still if it had not been for those improvements.

Sale of stock

2424. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) How do you sell the stock on your farm?—The system of auction marts is spreading very much, and there are fewer sold in the open market and more at the auction mart.

2425. Do you consider that a good system or a bad one?—I do not send my own stock to the auction marts.

2426. Do you sell it privately?—I always like to make part of my own bargain.

by live weight.

2427. Are cattle sold by weight?—No, except in one or two cases. Do you mean live weight?

2428. Yes?—I only know one case where it has been largely done.

2429. Have you tried that yourself?—In one or two cases.

2430. Do you think it well to adopt it generally?—I am sorry to say in one or two cases I have lost by it.

2431. You cannot speak generally of the system?—I am not in a position to speak generally of it.

Adulteration of margarine and feeding stuffs.

2432. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) You spoke of the adulteration of margarine and feeding stuffs as being a factor in the agricultural depression. Has that been so to any serious extent?—I believe the smaller class of farmers who have not been able to protect themselves have been victims to a great extent.

2433. Do you think that if these Adulteration Acts were applied to manures and feeding stuffs that they would be a remedy?—To a great extent. I must say in some respects it does not go so far as I advocate. I gave evidence before the Departmental Committee, and on some points I should have liked them to have gone a little further, but on the whole I think their recommendations, if adopted, will put a stop to it.

Beer.

2434. You spoke of the adulteration of beer; how do you propose to remedy that?—That any brewer who uses any substitute for barley, malt, and hops, should declare it. I would have it printed on the cask.

2435. Would not that have the effect of making beer much dearer?—I do not think so.

2436. You are aware that enormous quantities of sugar are used in the beer?—The price has not been reduced, whatever the price of malt and hops is.

2437. If the marking of beer has any effect it would make the beer that was brewed with sugar and other things dearer?—I would say it would make it cheaper. The substitutes for malt and hops must be cheaper or they would not be used, and consequently the beer would be sold at a lower price, or should be.

Distribution of produce.

2438. With regard to the distribution of fruit and vegetables, what do you say?—In the district to which I belong we do not go in for that sort of farming. It does not affect our district to any extent.

Low prices.

2439. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You said that the low prices of your produce were due partly to bad trade. I presume, to some extent, it is due to the state of the local markets?—That is so. The price of straw and hay varies a great deal according to the state of the local markets.

2440. Does it affect any other articles?—When the state of trade is bad, milk is worse to sell.

2441. And there is a distinct difference according as trade is good or bad?—That is so. Some winters if the trade is very bad, we are not able to raise the price of milk from its summer level. If the trade is good there is no difficulty in doing it.

2442. Does that apply to meat?—To a certain extent, it does.

2443. But you cannot trace the effect of the local market as distinct from that of foreign competition?—Not very well, because if markets at a distance were higher, of course the cattle would be sent there.

Margarine Act.

2444. I did not quite catch from you how you thought the Margarine Act should be amended. Should it be strengthened or more strictly enforced?—Both, decidedly it should be amended and strengthened.

2445. In what way?—I have not the recommendation of the committee by me, but I think one of the provisions was that it should not be allowed to be of the same colour as butter. That is one of the points that we wish embodied in the Bill.

2446. That it should be discoloured on purpose, so as to show what it is?—It should be shown with its natural colour. We do not ask for any extraneous colour, but to show it at its own colour.

2447. Is there much difference in the natural colour?—Pure margarine is a very pale straw colour.

2448. Would butter be sold of its natural colour?—I should have no objection to that.

Reduction of rent.

2449. As regards the remedies you propose for the depression, I presume you consider that the greatest would be a reduction of rent?—We would get more relief in that way than in any other way.

2450. Is it not possible, as far as the tenant farmer is concerned, that he might get all the relief that he requires in a reduction of rent?—I do not know. I see statements made that in some cases if a man had his land for nothing and paid no rent at all still he would not get a living out of it.

2451. Would you say that with regard to your own farm?—If I had my land rent free I should still make a good living.

2452. You would make a good living, but there is some difference between the rent free and the rent you actually pay?—I think I could get on at a reasonable reduction.

2453. Does not it come to this, that of the different remedies you propose, the reduction of rent is of a different kind from the others?—I see no means of enforcing the reduction of rent except by a bargain between a man who has land to let and a man who wants it. The other points should be enforced.

2454. My difficulty about the other points is that if they were enforced, the effect would be rather to increase the rent and that the tenant would be in much the same position as he is now?—Certainly they would not increase rent to the sitting tenant. They might in a fresh tenancy increase the rent.

2455. Assuming that tenants are willing to take the farms at present rents if all the improvements were introduced and the business improved in the way you suggest, the tenants would be asked and would in many cases give a higher rent and they would be in no better position?—I think the tenant would get part of the benefit.

2456. You think that the tenant would get the benefit of the improvement of the business generally?—I think he would.

2457. As far as the tenant is concerned the main question is one of rent?—Yes, mainly.

Wages.

2458. You did not mention what the average rate of wages is now and in 1873 and 1875. Could you give us the figures not merely the per-centage of reduction, but the figures?—At the present time the lowest paid labour I employ are casual Irishmen and they get 15*s.* a week and some little perquisites as well; the ordinary horsemen and cattle men have much higher wages, ranging from 17*s.* and 18*s.* to 1*l.*, and in some cases higher.

2459. And in 1875 these wages were what?—The highest wages then would be relatively 18*s.* for the lower-priced labour, and perhaps 22*s.* for the higher-priced labour.

2460. So that the reduction is from 3*s.* to 4*s.* as compared with what it was?—Yes, taking the highest level that the wages reached.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

2461. (*Mr. Clay.*) Do you consider the Agricultural Holdings Act has done a good deal for the outgoing tenant, or has the working of the Act damaged him?—Well, there is a feeling against the Act. I may say I attribute the bad repute of the Act to a few of the earlier cases that were tried under it. There is no doubt in the earlier stages of the operation of the Act many tenants made claims which they had very little chance of substantiating, and which if they had been better advised they would not have made. These claims were met by very absurd and extravagant counter claims, and the way the Act was enforced and the expenses of the arbitration upon those claims were so high that the Act came into bad repute at first. Many tenants were afraid of making claims. In the vast majority of cases when the tenancies cease the tenant is not entitled to make a claim at all, but I do believe there are tenants who are entitled to a moderate amount of compensation who are afraid of making a claim under the Act. They would rather go out without making a claim than be subject to the counter claims that probably would be raised and the great expense of assessing the amount.

Counter-claims.

2462. And the outcome of that was that the tenants at the end of their leases would rather dispense with the expense of the Agricultural Holdings Act, and they were inclined not to make claims but would rather let the farms go down?—There are no leases.

2463. Without leases there was a tendency not to lay out money?—That is my objection to leases, that the tendency was in the last few years for the farmer not to keep his farm up to the mark.

Arbitrators under the Act.

2464. Your remedy is to save the expense of law and witnesses and to have an official arbitrator appointed?—No, I do not go so far as that.

2465. (*Chairman.*) You rather repudiated the official arbitrator?—As a farmer I prefer to have some voice in the appointment of the arbitrator.

2466. (*Mr. Clay.*) Would you object to have a man in each county appointed who knew the conditions of the county and who could go into the case with a knowledge of the facts?—If they were appointed in a way such as I should approve of, I should like to have a voice in the selection of those men.

2467. Would you approve of the appointment of such men?—I have scarcely gone into that question.

2468. But that is a very important element in this business?—They would have to be appointed by representative bodies, by bodies representing both sides of agriculture, both owners and occupiers, and their appointment would have to be confirmed by the Board of Agriculture.

2469. If you had one or two expert men in each county who had been engaged in that business and who had made it a study, would not it be a better thing for the outgoing and incoming tenants to have men of that capacity, rather than to have men who have never handled agricultural questions and do not know what exhausted improvements are?—There are men who are carrying on arbitrations who do not grasp the provisions of the Act.

2470. But if they were acquainted with it and made it a study would not they have a knowledge as to what the exhausted improvements under the Act were?—I think it might be an advantage if the proper men were selected, it would cheapen the thing, and it would be more equitably worked.

Compensation under the Act.

2471. Do not you think that it is misleading to give the compensation according to the rise and fall of the produce, or would not the increased fertility meet it better?—The letting value rises or falls according to the state of farming, not altogether according to the state of the farms.

2472. Have not rents risen and fallen from the unfortunate conditions they are placed in just now by competition and by bad seasons?—There are many factors that really fix the value of land from time to time.

2473. Do you not think that this compensation award should be between the outgoing tenant and the landlord?—Certainly, in the first place, I should say that the owner is the man that the outgoing tenant should look to for compensation; the owner will then make his arrangement with the incoming tenant.

2474. Do you think that that is a sound proposition?—Yes.

2475. Throwing the whole burden upon the incoming tenant?—The outgoing tenant must look to the owner for his compensation, and it is then open to the landlord to make any arrangement with the incoming tenant.

2476. So that an incoming tenant offering for a farm values the farm according to its increased fertility?—He values it at what it is worth at the time that he takes it.

2477. He makes his offer simply?—At the same time he will consider whether he is likely to have any compensation to pay.

2478. How is he to know, a stranger coming into the country?—He will generally take pains to inquire what compensation he has to pay the outgoing tenant.

2479. Has he any chance like the landlord, or landlord's agent, of knowing what ought to be paid?—I would ask the owner if any compensation was to be paid to the outgoing tenant.

2480. Should it not be put into the Act that the outgoing tenant and the landlord should be the only two parties to deal with this matter?—I have not quite considered it. I am not prepared to assent to that at the present moment.

Wages.

2481. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) In the larger wage that you speak of of 1*l.* and upwards, do you include perquisites in that money value, or do they get perquisites besides?—In many cases the house is included.

2482. And a garden?—A small garden.

System of agriculture in Cleveland district.

2483. (*Mr. Little.*) Would you tell us what is the general system of agriculture in the Cleveland district. What are the principal objects that the farmers pursue?—They vary. Shall I give my own?

2484. I was going to ask your own separately. I imagine that yours is somewhat different from that of the ordinary farmers?—Near towns there is a good deal of milk selling—a good deal of dairy farming.

2485. In the Cleveland district you said there was about two-thirds arable land?—Yes.

2486. What are the principal products sold?—Grain.

2487. Barley and oats?—Barley and oats, and some wheat.

2488. Is it a sheep country?—Very few farmers keep sheep—very little of the land is adapted for feeding with roots.

2489. Is it a breeding country?—There is some breeding on most of the farms.

2490. Your own farm lies near to Middlesborough?—Three miles from Middlesborough.

2491. Have you a station nearer than Middlesborough?—Yes; there is a station on the farm.

2492. Then you have great facilities for disposing of your produce. You have liberty to sell and you have considerable facility for disposing of the produce?—Yes. When prices are what I consider remunerative I sell the produce; if not I consume it.

2493. What produce do you sell—straw?—I sell some straw. I keep a large herd of dairy cattle and I am not able to sell much straw.

2494. Do you sell seeds, or clover crops, green?—Sometimes.

2495. And they sometimes are very remunerative?—They are sold at as much as 10*l.* an acre.

2496. To mow and remove you have to pay for no labour on the crop?—That is so.

2497. Can you get stable manure for the farm?—I get it from about 60 horses.

2498. It is an inexpensive manure, is it not?—No, I consider that I pay its full value for it—with the cost of carriage added it is rather an expensive manure.

Low prices.

2499. Can you give us any particulars as to prices of produce? You spoke of the great fall in prices; have you any particulars at hand of the prices that you yourself have realised?—The first wheat I sold off my farm was at 70*s.* a quarter.

2500. That is 20 years ago, but in the last seven or ten years?—I have no figures, except I might say that there has been a general fall in prices.

Rates.

2501. You spoke of the rates having risen. I think you were going to put forward figures, to show what the rates have been during the last eight years?—I have particulars of what several of the rates have been during those eight years.

2502. But is that the actual amount paid, or the sum in the pound?—The actual amount paid for the eight years.

2503. Will you give us that?—I have the actual amount for the poor rate each year, and the average for the eight years of the whole of the rates that I have actually paid. The average of the whole rates that I have paid in the last eight years is 66*l.* 1*s.* 3*d.*

2504. But I am referring to the rise and fall; you complain of a rise in the rates?—Yes; the poor rates have fluctuated according to the state of trade in the district. I can give you for every year from 1886 to 1893, the amount of the poor rate. In 1886 it was 42*l.*; in 1887 it was 42*l.*; in 1888 it was 44*l.* 2*s.*; in 1889 it fell to 37*l.* 16*s.*; in 1890 it fell to 33*l.* 12*s.*; in 1891 it fell to 29*l.* 8*s.*; in 1892 it got up to 39*l.* 18*s.*, and in 1893 I paid 42*l.*, and I anticipate that in 1894 it will be higher still.

2505. Then so far as the poor rate alone goes, there is not a rise; there is no increase?—Not in the eight years.

2506. Then if there has been an increase in rates, it has been a sanitary rate or some rate of that kind?—Of course my complaint as to the increase of the rate, was as a comparison between the rates now and what the rates were at the time that I took the farm.

2507. (*Chairman.*) When was the transfer of that parish from one union into another?—I think it would be in 1886 or 1887.

2508. That was the main cause of the increase?—Yes; it was a local cause.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

2509. (*Mr. Little.*) Now with reference to the Agricultural Holdings Act, you spoke of a single arbitrator being appointed; are you aware that under the Act that is possible?—I am perfectly aware that it is so.

Compensation.

2510. Is not the principle upon which compensation is based, that a man should be paid for that which he has not had an opportunity of recovering?—That is the essence of the Act.

2511. My friend on my left asked you about the landlord only being responsible; he is the only person responsible under the Act for the compensation to the outgoing tenant?—That is so.

2512. As regards a large portion of the usual sum awarded to the outgoing tenant, is not the incoming tenant the proper person to pay it, I mean for acts of husbandry, for crops, and for manures?—Certainly, for the tillage.

2513. And for manures?—He would be bound by his agreement.

2514. In the absence of agreement, is there not some common sense in making the incoming tenant pay for those things which are perishable and may be worked out in a short time?—Certainly, for the cultivation of the land and the manure left on the farm he should pay.

2515. And the manures in the soil; as a matter of fact and common sense, is it not reasonable?—It is only reasonable that the incoming tenant should be expected to pay for them.

2516. That the tenant should pay for what he may exhaust?—It seems reasonable that he should do that.

2517. For that which is perishable, that is to say, for "indition" as distinct from "fertility," as Sir John Lawes defines it?—At the same time, as the incoming tenant, I should still like to have some voice in the matter. I should like to know what it was I was paying for as a general principle.

2518. As a general principle and practice the incoming tenant paying for that which may be exhausted in a short time, you think, is a reasonable and common sense one?—On the whole it is.

2519. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Upon that subject I should like to ask one further question. In your district what time do you enter, at Michaelmas or Lady Day?—Lady Day.

2520. Is it not almost impossible to have any other arrangement than that the incoming tenant should pay tenant right to the out-going tenant?—Practically, there is no tenant-right except what is awarded under the Act.

2521. Are the farms in your district as a rule, held under the Act?—There is no means of contracting out of it. There are some farms, where there has been an agreement substituted for compensation under the Act.

2522. Quite so; what I want to know is, are the farms in your district held under the Act, or held under agreement, or held under custom?—In the majority of cases there is an agreement, but I believe in very few cases is specific compensation provided for in the agreement. As a rule, I should say the compensation would be really under the Act. There are one or two estates where they have a specific scale of compensation, which takes the place of compensation, which might be awarded under the Act.

2523. In your district of Yorkshire, there was no custom of the county?—No, not under which you could have compensation.

2524. But that is the case in many parts of Yorkshire, is it not?—Not in the North Riding.

2525. It would be then in the East Riding with which you are not acquainted?—On the Wolds of Yorkshire there were some.

2526. What I want to press upon you is this. I want to ask whether in the case of an agreement, or in the case of a farm, which is held under an agreement in which supposing compensation is given, it would be practicable in a Lady Day entry for the landlord in all cases to pay compensation to the tenant?—In the first place he should do. Of course he might not be able to let his farm.

2527. Then he becomes his own incoming tenant, and has to pay it himself; but where there is an incoming tenant, would it not be an unworkable system as a practice that the compensation which the landlord would be called upon to pay, would be for the production of crops which the incoming tenant is going to reap?—Generally so, to a great extent.

2528. Then it would be practically an unworkable arrangement in the case of a Lady Day entry?—Of course compensation would not be awarded, unless it was of value to the incoming tenant.

Importation of live-stock.

2529. You spoke upon the question of cattle disease; have you suffered in past days in your part of Yorkshire from the effect of diseases like pleuro-pneumonia and foot-and-mouth disease?—In the case of foot-and-mouth disease, not in very recent years. Some few years ago before we had the legislation that we have now we did suffer to a great extent.

2530. In past years?—In past years.

2531. Did you in your part of Yorkshire, suffer also from pleuro-pneumonia?—We have had no very serious outbreaks recently.

2532. Have restrictions been imposed in your part of Yorkshire, for the prevention of cattle disease by the Board of Agriculture?—In some areas.

2533. Where that has been the case, has it inflicted a great deal of inconvenience?—No doubt; at the same time we are prepared to submit to inconvenience, and have been glad to do so for the sake of immunity from disease.

2534. I ask the question for the purpose of arriving at this opinion, and that is that the return of any of those diseases would inflict a great deal of injury to agriculture?—There is no doubt of that.

2535. And it is for that reason that you advocate a total prohibition of the importation of live cattle into the country; and that your Chamber, as I understand, advocate universal compulsory slaughter at the port of landing?—The Chamber go for that. I go further. I would prohibit the importation of all live stock.

2536. Are you aware that that is practically the case at the present moment, and has been so for a good many months, and that no animals are permitted to be imported alive into the interior?—At the present moment, but at the same time we are still in constant fear that these regulations will be relaxed at any moment, as soon as certain countries have a clean bill of health, and we are afraid that the state of affairs in those countries would not justify the relaxation.

2537. For that reason what you press as a matter of great importance is that the slaughter of all cattle on landing should be made compulsory?—We press that very strongly.

Agreements.

2538. With regard to what you said about the Agricultural Holdings Act, do I understand you that farms are more usually held under agreements in writing in your district, than under the Agricultural Holdings Act itself?—In most cases there is an agreement in writing—in nearly every case.

Agricultural Holdings Act. Compensation.

2539. And where that is the case do those agreements, as a rule, give satisfaction?—They do not take the place of the Act. I may say that in my own agreement there is a compensation clause which I do not consider a reasonable substitution for the Act, and if I were leaving the farm I should probably make a claim under the Act.

2540. You would make a claim under the Act; you prefer to claim under the Act instead of asking for additional compensation under the agreement?—With reference to my agreement I would like additional clauses in my agreement to prevent an appeal to the Act.

2541. You have asked for additional clauses giving you further compensation, and it has not been accepted, is that it?—When the Act was passed I asked for further clauses which would meet the case.

Compensation for high farming.

2542. You spoke of continuous high farming, and you mentioned the case where for 20 years a good deal of cake might have been consumed on grass land, and I understood you to say that one of your complaints of the Act was that for that continuous good farming there was at present no compensation?—No further compensation than there would be for a very short period.

2543. Does not the tenant to some extent get compensation from the use of the increased fertility of the land in all those years?—To some extent he does; at the same time he has added permanently to the letting value of that pasture.

2544. Besides that, you think that he ought to be compensated in addition to anything that he has at present?—He ought to have some further compensation.

2545. I apprehend from what you told us that this is a good farm?—It is a useful farm.

2546. Is it a fair sample of the farms in the district?—I should say it is, perhaps better than the average.

2547. Better than most is it?—From the situation and buildings on it, it is.

2548. In a good year how many quarters of wheat do you grow per acre?—We are quite content with five quarters to the acre; I have grown more.

2549. But will it grow five quarters to the acre as a rule?—It is only on a very small area that I grow wheat, and naturally it is on the best of the land. When I grow a larger acreage I did not grow five quarters per acre.

Rent per acre.

2550. The rent is now 36*s.* per acre?—Yes.

2551. How long has that been the rent?—I think since 1883.

2552. And then it was reduced?—It was reduced from 2*l.*, I think in 1883, I could not give the exact year, it was reduced from 40*s.*

2553. Was 40*s.* the rent at which you took it?—Yes.

2554. Then in the good days that you speak of, when wheat was making 70*s.* per quarter, you had a pretty good time of it?—I did not make much money even then.

2555. At all events you were much more favourably situated than you are at present?—Undoubtedly.

2556. I think you told us you had considerable facilities for getting manure?—Yes.

2557. And that, I suppose, is one of the reasons why the rent appears to be comparatively high?—I say that I cart this manure three miles.

2558. Does your rent represent the standard of rents at all in the district?—It is higher than the average.

2559. What would be the average?—In the immediate district I should say the average would be 30*s.* to 32*s.* per acre, and as we get further away from the town the average is lower.

Low prices.

2560. I understood you to say that the chief cause of agricultural depression, in your opinion, is the great fall in the price of agricultural produce?—That is the chief cause.

2561. And I suppose the real remedy would be a rise in price?—Yes.

2562. You were asked just now whether the tendency of the various remedies which had been suggested would not rather be an increased rent to that which is paid by tenants at present, and consequently that the chief part of the benefit would go to the landlords. What I want to ask is this question: When the prices were higher, and when the rents were much higher than they are at present, some 20 years ago, were not the tenant farmers infinitely better off than they are at present?—They must have been better off than they are now. In many cases they are as badly off as they possibly can be.

2563. And 20 years ago farmers did fairly well?—Much better than now.

2564. And there was no cry of depression?—Well, more or less there has been generally some cry.

2565. 20 years ago?—20 years ago there were rather inflated values in most things.

2566. At all events they were infinitely better off than now?—I think prices were higher from 1873 to 1875 and 1876 than they have ever been almost in this generation.

2567. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Were not there complaints of high wages in 1872 and 1873?—Wages were very high then.

2568. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Do you think the profits have almost vanished in your district?—In many cases there are no profits.

Rents.

2569. How do you account for the rents keeping up so high?—I must confess I do not understand it. It is a marvel to me how rents are paid at all in some cases.

2570. But they are very high in your neighbourhood, apparently?—They are high. I think, in many cases, there must be considerable arrears, and that rents are not actually paid.

2571. But there is a demand for farms still in the neighbourhood?—Any farm almost could be let at some rent. I think almost all of them are actually let.

2572. At these high rents?—Not all high rents.

2573. Tolerably high rents?—Yes.

2574. And yet nobody is making any profit out of it?—Very few.

2575. That is very strange?—I would not like to say that any farmer is making a profit beyond living.

Rates.

2576. You gave the poor rates for eight years; have you got the other rates?—I have the total rates.

2577. What are the other rates?—The highway rate, the sanitary rate, and the police rate.

2578. Have these gone up or down in the last eight years?—When I took the farm there was no sanitary rate. That has not averaged much. The average of the poor rate for the eight years has been 38*l.* 17*s.*; the average of the highway rate is 17*l.* 10*s.*; the police rate is 6*l.* 0*s.* 9*d.*, and the sanitary rate is 3*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* in the eight years.

2579. If you had taken the farm in 1886 and there had been the arrangement of halving the rates between the owner and occupier, you would not have gained—the rates have not risen, and in some cases they have fallen?—Not in 1886; in 1876 I should. He would have paid half the sanitary rate.

2580. But during the last eight years you would not have gained by it?—There has been no very great increase during the eight years.

2581. There has been a slight increase in the last two years in the poor rate; is that owing to a strike?—It is owing generally to bad trade.

2582. Has not there been a strike?—There has been a strike among the colliers in Durham, which must affect the iron trade, you know.

2583. Have you any particular plan for making other properties contribute to the rates?—I suggest that there should be only one basis for all taxation, and that should be the income tax basis.

2584. You have no other remedy?—No.

2585. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Supposing there was a rise in agricultural prices of 25 per cent. next year, do you think that the landlords would increase their rent?—If the increase was maintained undoubtedly the landlord would ask for his share.

Tenants' capital.

2586. Do you think that the tenants are short of capital in your district?—No doubt they are; at all times the tendency has been for farmers to take more land than they have sufficient capital for. Of late years their capital must have been enormously reduced. At the present day not half the farmers in the country have sufficient capital employed upon their farms.

Arrears of rent.

2587. You said just now that there were a great many arrears of rent in your opinion?—Of course I have no means of knowing that. I think there must be, seeing the way that many men carry on their farms, otherwise I do not know, how they could pay their rent.

2588. Do the arrears of rent show that there has been too much rent charged in the past?—It means that the tenant is not actually able to pay the rent.

2589. He is not actually able to pay the rent charged by the landlord, you mean?—Perhaps the landlord has taken what he can get, of course I cannot prove that. It is only a supposition.

Free sale.

2590. You said just now that the tenant might sell what he liked as long as he pays his rent?—In some cases, in spite of agreement to the contrary, they have been allowed to sell.

2591. As long as he pays the rent; is the rent the chief object to the landlord?—To some landlords I am sorry to say it is.

Land Courts.

2592. Why do you object to an outside tribunal to fix the rents?—I think for the same reason that there would be an objection to fix the price of any commodity.

2593. But you said that reductions would be enforced by the tenants being unable to take farms?—The law of supply and demand may regulate that.

2594. Would not it be better that some impartial tribunal should come in to fix the rent which the tenant would be able to pay, without resorting to that extreme method?—I am opposed to any compulsory tribunal for the fixing of rents.

Demand for farms.

2595. You said just now that the land agents told you that farms were let more readily than they were?—Several agents say they have had less difficulty in the last two years than in the preceding years.

2596. That does not show that tenants are unable to take farms?—I could not understand the statement. It might be true, but I must confess that I do not understand how it was so.

Low prices.

2597. What is the reduction in value of agricultural produce in your neighbourhood—I mean to say the proportionate reduction?—I have not worked it out at all in figures. Of course the prices are not stationary—they fluctuate.

2598. Is it more that 15 per cent.?—Decidedly so, I should think.

2599. And there has been 15 per cent. reduction in rent?—In round figures, yes.

2600. Therefore the prices of agricultural produce have fallen a great deal more than the rent has fallen?—That is so.

Rates.

2601. Do you think the tenant would derive benefit from lowering the rates?—He would receive part of the benefit; he would not get the whole. In the case of a fresh tenancy, no doubt, the landlord would receive a considerable part of the benefit.

2602. He would only receive it through the voluntary action of his landlord?—If it helped the landlord it must help his tenant.

2603. You said that some landlords only considered rent?—Some few; it is quite exceptional. I should be sorry that it should go forth that it is so of the majority of landlords.

Improvements by tenants.

2604. Do you think that permanent improvements should be allowed, or that a tenant should be allowed to make a permanent improvement with the consent of an outside tribunal?—Yes, where his landlord refuses permission.

2605. Where the landlord refuses a reasonable reduction of rent do you think an outside tribunal should have the power of fixing that as well?—I cannot assent to that.

2606. Why do you bring the outside tribunal in in one instance and not in the other?—There is rather a difference; I am opposed to outsiders fixing the prices of any article.

2607. But this would be arbitrary, to allow the tenants to put up buildings and permanent improvements without the landlord's consent?—If it was for the benefit of the holding, that is, where the landlord is not able to put it up and still refuses to allow the tenant to do so.

2608. I put rent upon exactly the same level. The landlord refuses to reduce his rent?—I cannot admit the principle of anyone fixing the price of a thing.

2609. Is not an arbitrary principle inserted in the Agricultural Holdings Act?—No; to a certain extent it provides how a man may deal with his property. I do not think, that the principle of fixing rents is at all embodied in any part of the Act.

2610. But there is an arbitrary principle, a compulsory principle, in the Agricultural Holdings Acts?—Yes, to a certain extent.

Prices of dairy produce.

2611. Could you tell me, as compared with 20 years ago, what are the prices of buttermilk, and such like produce in your district?—There has not been so great a fall in the price of dairy produce in the last 20 years as in cereals.

2612. You said too there was a 5 per cent. increase in railway rates since the passing of the recent Act?—Generally all round there has been an increase of 5 per cent.

2613. Which is not applied to foreign produce?—I say it was stated in the evidence given before the Committee, and I do not think that the railway companies rebutted that evidence, that the 5 per cent. increase has not been put on at the seaports.

Reduction of rents.

2614. (*Mr. Channing.*) You spoke of some landlords only considering rent. You, of course, are aware that a great many of the landlords are so burdened with mortgages and charges that they are not in a position to make the same reductions that others can make?—I quite admit that many are not in a position to make them.

2615. Your Chambers in Yorkshire have never considered the legal question of mortgages and charges upon land in its relation to agriculture, have they?—No, they look upon them as charges which exist and which cannot well be removed.

2616. You spoke of land being readily relet at some sort of rent. I should like to ask you whether the rents at which land is relet to new tenants are very much lower than rents which older tenants in the same district are paying?—Of course in many cases where there has been a change, the rent has been reduced. There are some cases where the rent has not been reduced, where they have been relet at the existing rent.

2617. Have you heard of any farms relet during the last three years, or since 1888, at an increase of rent?—I heard of one case, I do not know whether it was actually so, but I did hear that an agent had let a farm at a higher rent; I do not know whether that was so.

Law of distress.

2618. You spoke of the insufficient capital of tenants generally. Have you any opinion to express about the law of distress and its effect upon that question?—No doubt the law of distress cuts both ways. It enables men to take more land than they would otherwise do, and it unduly forces up rents. Even with the limited protection that the owner has under the present law of distress he has a sort of preferential claim, and in consequence many a man is allowed to take more land than otherwise he would be able to take.

2619. With less capital?—More land than he could take and work fairly.

2620. (*Chairman.*) Has your Chamber of Agriculture expressed any opinion upon that subject?—I do not call to mind any particular resolution on that subject.

2621. Can you state what is the general view of the district about it?—Some are in favour of the law of distress remaining as it is at present because they consider that the landlord is the most lenient creditor that they would have to deal with. The feeling of small farmers is that they would rather have the law of distress stand as it is now. Many larger farmers would have it done away with because they would be put in a better position.

2622. It rather protects the small farmers against other creditors?—Well, at the expense of other creditors. He looks upon it that if it were done away with, the landlord would not be able to show the same forbearance that he does.

2623. He would be obliged to press for the rent as soon as it is due?—Yes.

Tenants' capital.

2624. (*Mr. Channing.*) It thus leads to letting men with insufficient capital go upon the land, and it diminishes the general credit of the farmer in dealing with others?—It must do so to a small extent.

2625. About the capital. The reductions in your district seem to have been very small. Is it your opinion that tenants in the last 15 years have in some cases been paying the rent out of capital; I mean, that allowing the minimum profit that they might reasonably expect in their business, the rent has not been made out of the land?—Many of them must no doubt have done so.

Arbitration.

2626. Then you expressed an opinion in favour of a single arbitrator; you would have him appointed, I think, by some representatives of the landlords' interest and of the farmers' interest. Have you worked that out in any proposal?—No, because it was not a proposal. I replied that it did not seem an unfair way if they were appointed by both sides. I thought that might be a way out of the difficulty.

2627. Are you aware that it has been suggested that they should be appointed by a committee of the County Council, with the approval of the Board of Agriculture?—I have seen some such suggestion.

2628. Do you approve of that idea?—I have not considered the question sufficiently to give an answer upon that point.

2629. But surely you are of opinion that men specially selected for their fitness by some person or persons competent to select them would be better than the ordinary chance valuers?—It would be both cheaper, and you would have better decisions given.

Free sale.

2630. You took your own farm and paid a higher rent for it, because you had freedom of sale of produce, I understand?—Undoubtedly so.

2631. I want to know whether it is your opinion that freedom of sale of produce should be given by law as well as by agreement, as you yourself arranged?—I am scarcely prepared to advocate that.

2632. But if the law provides that an equivalent in the form of manure—artificial manure or otherwise—should be returned?—I should like to see much greater freedom of cultivation and sale of produce than is generally allowed, subject, of course, to reasonable precautions against deterioration.

2633. In all these leases there are provisions for penal rents for breaches of order of cultivation, and so on. Do you approve of that as a way of dealing with the matter?—I look upon that as a dead letter, because I think that any penal rent would not be enforced by any court of law, and that the case would be treated on its merits by an arbitrator.

2634. But would it not be much simpler to put back the manures and leave the tenant to manage his business in his own way?—I think that there should be as much freedom as is consistent with the landlord's interests, given to every tenant.

Compensation for high farming.

2635. You gave us a case, which I will not ask further questions about, in which a tenant had an award in respect of continuous high cultivation?—Yes, I know one case. The man who made the award told me of this case.

2636. Have you anything to add materially to what you have already told us in regard to that case. Is this in Yorkshire?—It was in Yorkshire.

2637. Your opinion was, I suppose, on the advice of some solicitor or someone acquainted with the law that he would not have been sustained in his award?—No; that was the arbitrator's own opinion; it was the opinion of anyone who had studied the Act that it would be so.

2638. You wish that right to be made legal?—Yes.

2639. And also the right to get suitable permanent improvements if an arbitrator considered them to fit in with the general uses of the farm?—Yes.

2640. You are anxious to get this increased compensation for really high farming for tenants. Would you limit it only to a quitting tenant or do you think that on the change of the terms of the tenancy he also ought to have, under those circumstances, what he had done for the farm considered before the terms were re-adjusted?—I take it, if he was making a fresh agreement, he would naturally consider that himself. and in any future terms he would take that into consideration. I cannot help thinking that the assessing of the amount of compensation might give rise to friction, and might make it more difficult to come to terms for a future tenancy.

Compensation for improvements.

2641. You think that a tenant would ask to have his improvements considered in settling the new terms?—If I was agreeing to fresh terms I should undoubtedly consider that myself, and besides, if the amount of compensation was assessed at the end of the tenancy, if the sitting tenant received it in one hand he would have to pay it with the other.

2642. Do you think it is just that he should have his improvements considered in settling the rent?—I am opposed to raising a man's rent on his own improvements.

2643. You were asked questions about the payments of incoming tenants being too high. It has been often said in some counties the incoming tenant really pays for more than he gets in doing so under the custom?—I do not think so.

2644. In the southern counties, is it not so?—I am aware that the tenant-right is very heavy, but, perhaps, it is a necessary consequence of the period of the year at which the change of tenancy takes place.

2645. But the Agricultural Holdings Act is limited to added fertility and real improvement in the soil, so that the incoming tenant is paying for value received?—There is no doubt that to the extent that one man has improved it the other pays higher for it.

2646. Would not it be much simpler to get rid of the whole of the anomalies, and merely to say that the landlord, or the incoming tenant through him, should pay for the added fertility of the farm?—I cannot say that I have considered that question to be able to give an opinion.

2647. I presume you are not in favour of free sale of improvements?—No.

Ground game.

2648. (*Captain Thomas.*) Have you much ground game?—There are more rabbits than there ought to be.

2649. Have the farmers availed themselves of the Ground Game Act?—Not to any very great extent.

2650. Has any damage been done by the ground game?—I know cases where damage has been done by rabbits.

2651. Are the farmers compensated in any way?—I have a case in my mind where a man had to leave his farm entirely on that account. The game was let to a shooting tenant, that was how it arose. The man was a very good tenant, and he had to leave his farm on account of the damage done by rabbits. I daresay it was owing to misrepresentations of the gamekeeper employed by the shooting tenant.

2652. Do the landowners allow the tenants to shoot the ground game?—Some do not interfere, others express a wish that they should not avail themselves of the Act, but there is not much cause for complaint.

Rates.

2653. You had your rent reduced 10 per cent. and then 5 per cent.?—When I took the farm it was in a union where the basis of rates was very low indeed. When we came into the Middlesborough Union they adopted a different basis of assessment, and it was very much higher.

2654. You got your rent reduced?—Yes.

2655. And of course, naturally you would expect to get your rates reduced in proportion?—Practically I had not been assessed at the full rent, and I could not go before the Assessment Committee.

2656. Are the farms let by tender?—Not as a rule.

Tenants capital.

2657. The farmers have been paying some of that rent out of capital. Have they much capital?—They cannot have much left in many of these cases.

2658. How do they manage to pay rent? Do they borrow money?—I do not know. It has been always a puzzle to me how many farmers pay the rent at all. One can judge by what they have on their farms. It is quite incomprehensible how they pay the rent.

2659. What capital do you consider necessary per acre for a farm?—It varies a good deal according to the system of farming you adopt.

2660. Take an arable farm for instance?—In my own case, I am employing about 12*l.* per acre, but I know a great many farms where they are not employing half that capital. I know farms where the capital is not much more than 2*l.* or 3*l.* per acre, where there is very little stock kept.

2661. Is the land suffering from want of capital?—It must suffer from want of capital where there is so little employed. There is no manure nor labour.

2662. Is that more so now than it was years ago?—There is no doubt that the capital is much less; the stock is reduced and less labour is employed. You need only go through the country to see it.

Labour.

2663. Are you well supplied with labour?—As a rule there is quite sufficient to meet the demand.

2664. Is the quality as good as it used to be?—Scarcely so. The best of the lads and young men drift away to other employments.

Tithe.

2665. (*Mr. Everett.*) You have paid tithe on your farm hitherto?—Only the small tithe, the vicarial tithe.

2666. Do you pay that in addition to the rent?—Yes, in addition to the rent that I pay to the landlord. I recoup him for that which he paid to the tithe owner.

2667. You really pay that addition to the 36*s.* per acre?—Yes.

Low prices.

2668. You have told us that the fall in prices, that the low prices, are the worst trouble that agriculturists are suffering under I think?—Yes.

2669. Agriculture on the whole was very prosperous was it not till 1879—speaking generally?—About 1875 or 1876 prices were the highest and values were the highest, and since then it has got gradually lower. In 1879 owing to an excessively bad season the people felt it more that year.

2670. Till that year the industry had been as a whole a fairly prosperous industry?—Yes, the pressure had not begun so soon in Yorkshire as in the South of England.

2671. During the period when farmers were paying the high rents previously to 1879 they paid both their rents and rates more easily, I think you told Mr. Chaplin?—There is no doubt about that.

2672. And the fall in prices has checked permanent improvements upon the land, has it not?—To a great extent it has done so.

2673. And tended to lessen the production out of the soil?—Undoubtedly.

2674. And to diminish employment upon the soil?—That is so.

2675. In fact it has lessened the amount of money that the produce on an average acre of land would give, and there is so much less to divide amongst the classes interested in the industry?—The amount land is producing is less per acre.

2676. And not only a less quantity of stuff but much less money to divide amongst the classes interested?—Much less.

2677. Is not rent really the measure of prosperity? When rents are going up is it not a token that the industry is a prosperous one?—Yes.

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2678. And when they are going down, that the industry is in distress?—The capacity to pay rent must be an index.

2679. The continuance of high rents is a proof that the industry is flourishing and the continuance of low rents shows the reverse?—Of course the rents do not get adjusted so quickly as the circumstances change.

2680. But still a rising rent is an indication that the industry is prosperous, and a falling rent is a sign that the industry is suffering adversity?—It must mean that.

2681. Looking over a wide circle; would you regard a fall in price as a blessing or as a calamity?—I do not think that excessive lowness of price is an unmixed benefit to any class.

2682. Do you know of any industry besides agriculture that has been as prosperous during the last 15 years as it was before?—There are industries more liable to sudden and violent fluctuations even than farming is.

2683. Do you think if all the ameliorations that you have suggested were carried out, but notwithstanding that prices still continued to fall, those ameliorations would prevent agriculture from suffering still more trouble?—I am certain that they could not put it back on its former basis.

2684. And if prices continued to fall they could not prevent it falling into a still worse condition?—No.

2685. Have you any idea what the cause of the fall in prices is?—I suppose, to a certain extent, it must be owing to large importations.

2686. You are aware that we had protection at one time?—Yes.

2687. You know that the Corn Laws were imposed in 1815?—Yes.

2688. And that those Corn Laws lasted 31 years?—Yes.

2689. Are you also aware that the 32 years that followed repeal were more prosperous to agriculture than the years of protection?—For one reason that at that time war had a great deal to do with the level of prices. The prices were always affected more or less by the state of the country as to whether we were at peace or at war with other countries.

2690. I may say that during the 32 years of free trade rule, prices of corn were just about the same as the 31 years during which the Corn Laws lasted?—I am scarcely prepared to go back so far. It is beyond my experience.

2691. (*Mr. Elton.*) Does your experience go back to the time when wheat cultivation was not so prevalent as it became under modern machinery?—I cannot go back to the earlier days. That is much beyond the time that I am prepared to speak to.

2692. What sort of barley have you? You spoke about the malt for making beer; do you grow on your farm or in your district a good malting barley for beer?—It is just a useful barley.

2693. You were speaking generally, not with special reference to your own industry?—That is so. I apply it generally to the whole county.

Margarine Act.

2694. With reference to margarine being sold for butter, you said, or at least I gathered so, that the sale of margarine still interferes with the proper sale of butter?—Beyond that, it re-acts upon the whole dairy industry of the country; it displaces so much genuine butter that less butter is made, which throws more milk upon the market which would otherwise be made into butter.

2695. If the margarine was out of the way do you think that the inferior qualities of Irish butter would be sold?—I do not object to margarine being sold as what it really is. All that I ask for is that it should not be sold as butter.

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2696. You would not object to the low class of Irish butter that I have heard described as fit for adulterating margarine?—I do not object to anything being sold provided it is sold in its true name.

2697. Only one more question; you say that margarine ought not only to be sold under its own name, but also in its true colours?—That is so; until that is done it will be utterly impossible to check adulteration.

2698. I am only asking for information, but you say that pure margarine is almost white?—It is very pale.

2699. Like butter made with scalded cream?—I will not say that no butter is as light in colour as pure margarine, but there is very little butter that has so little colour as margarine.

2700. What is it made of?—Animal fat of all grades, from carefully prepared to the veriest filth that can be produced.

2701. The Margarine Act is neglected in some boroughs where they neglect the Food and Drugs Act?—Entirely in some boroughs and in some counties as well.

2702. Can you tell me whether there is any special neglect of the Margarine Act, or is it only special neglect of the Adulteration Acts?—I am not prepared to speak, but the Margarine Act is not enforced by some authorities where the Food and Drugs Act is.

2703. That is what I wanted to know?—I should say that there is a systematic neglect of the Margarine Act even where there is a partial enforcement of the Food and Drugs Act.

2704. Then is the Margarine Act deliberately and systematically evaded?—By some authorities it certainly is.

2705. I am quite aware that some years ago margarine was made out of the disagreeable ingredients you have mentioned; have you not heard that margarine was made completely out of cotton seed oil coloured up with cocoa-nut?—I would not say that there is any grease under the sun that is not made into margarine.

2706. I want to know a little more exactly, because I had something to do with the Margarine Act?—There are all grades from carefully refined fat, downwards; Vegetable oils I know are used in addition.

2707. I have had a good deal of evidence put before me to show that the animal fat manufacture had almost entirely ceased a few years ago, and that margarine was no longer made of animal fat because so much is made out of railway grease and waste cotton oil?—I should say that the higher grades of margarine are made from carefully refined fat.

2708. Are not you aware that the margarine of commerce made from cotton seed and cocoa-nut oil would not be white but butter colour?—My impression was that cotton-seed oil was more used for enriching cheese than margarine.

2709. We will take your impression. You do not know that this cotton seed oil is largely used in making imitations of butter?—I do not know it from my own experience.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

2710. (*Lord Vernon.*) Do not you think that if tenants were quite secure of realising the outlay upon any improvements they make, they would make further improvements than they do at present?—Where they have capital to do it with, I think they would.

Arbitration.

2711. In your evidence you say you think it would be a good thing to enable arbitrations to take place with one arbitrator instead of two?—It is a matter of reducing the cost.

2712. Do not you think that if certain valuers who were to arbitrate under the Act were obliged to hold certificates that would meet the case?—I am certainly in favour of every man who is empowered to administer the Act having the certificate granted.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. SAMUEL KIDNER called and examined.

2713. (*Chairman.*) Are you a farmer residing at Taunton?—Yes.

2714. What sized farm do you occupy?—340 acres.

2715. Have you been requested to come here on behalf of the Taunton Farmers' Club?—Yes.

2716. How many members are there of that club?—About 140 I think. It is considerably over 100. I am not certain of the number.

2717. Are they all farmers within that district?—They are all farmers within that district, and there are a few landowners in it as well.

2718. What is the general character of the country?—Mixed agriculture.

2719. Is there much arable land?—I should think more than half, probably.

2720. And the other, is it grass?—It is grass. We have some orchard.

2721. Are the farms mainly dairy farms or what?—No, the system is very mixed as well—breeding and grazing — as much mixture as you ordinarily find. Most of the dairy work is done in the farmhouses. Very few dairies are let there.

2722. On what subjects have you been requested to speak here?—I have some notes, would you wish me to read them?

Causes of depression.

Remedies for depression.

2723. Yes?—The principal causes of agricultural depression I think are the following, the low prices obtainable for all kinds of agricultural produce, due chiefly to foreign competition. The great increase in rent in times of inflated prices, with a too slow reduction under the subsequent depression. Antiquated and vexatious agreements and the want of security for the tenant's capital. The unfair burdens placed on the land, and preferential railway rates in favour of foreign produce. Immediate relief is to be sought in the lowering of rents, which are still far too high, and in many cases considerably above those prevailing 30 years ago. And among the enactments required I should first place that dealing with the question of land tenure, a more enlightened interpretation of which would, I think, materially improve the relations of landlord and tenant, bring their interest into greater harmony, and thereby strengthen their common interest. On the question of land tenure I would suggest that more freedom of cultivation and sale of produce is urgently required, and although agreements have in late years in many cases been drawn on more reasonable lines many (and on large estates) still contain provisions and restrictions which are one-sided and unreasonable, and in no way warranted by the conditions under which agriculture in the present day has to be carried on. These are framed for the most part by lawyers and agents employed by the landlord, and generally not much in sympathy with the tenant farmer, and too often with no practical knowledge. Under these conditions the tenant, acting single handed, is seldom in a position to dictate terms, or obtain reasonable concessions, and many, through ignorance or carelessness, take little trouble to get such agreements drawn on practical lines, the majority having little idea of some of those conditions until learning them to their cost. I think beyond stipulations as to maintaining the character of the farm (by that I mean that pasture should not be converted into arable and such like) and as to repairs, &c., few covenants are required, but that it should be legally established that the tenant should be compensated for any improvements by which he has increased the value of his holding, whilst at the same time he should be responsible to his landlord for any deterioration caused by him through neglect or mismanagement. This I think could be easily accomplished by the provision of an official and popularly elected referee in stated districts to whom the task should be assigned at the commencement of a term, of scheduling the condition of the holding, such schedule to form the basis on which increased value or deterioration should be estimated at the termination of a holding, or such other time, as may be agreed on.

2724. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Would you read that last sentence again?—Yes. By the provision of an official and popularly elected referee in stated districts, to whom the task should be assigned at the commencement of a term of scheduling the condition of the holding, such schedule to form the basis on which increased value or deterioration should be estimated, at the termination of a holding, or such other time as may be agreed on. In the procedure, in case of valuations it should be competent for either party to act for themselves, if they so desire, and the official referee to settle all matters on which they cannot agree, unless they mutually agree on some other third party. As regards sitting tenants it is urgently required to the well-being of agriculture and for the protection of the sitting tenant, that some tribunal be appointed to fix rents in case of appeal, and that fair compensation be awarded for disturbance, in view of the disadvantages under which a tenant labours, in the contemplation of a change of holding, not only by his being thrown out of business, and perhaps in middle life or advanced age having to leave his home and friends, but also by the large pecuniary loss he necessarily sustains. This, however, should not apply to disturbance on account of bad management. And under the heading of game——

Reduction in rents.

2725. (*Chairman.*) I think before we go to those other matters we had better ask you a few questions upon the subjects that you have already dealt with, namely, the question of rent, and the question of tenure. You stated just now that the rents in your districts are still in your opinion rather too high?—Yes.

2726. And although there have been reductions they have not come down to the point at which they were before the rise a few years ago?—That is so.

2727. What are the average rents in your district?—I should say generally that they would range from 1*l.* to over 2*l.* an acre in the district.

2728. What was the time at which the rents were high to which you alluded?—I should think in the seventies.

2729. When did they begin to fall?—Soon after the year 1879, I should think.

2730. At what rates were the rents in 1870 as compared with the present time?—It depends a great deal upon whether people hold on leases or whether they have yearly agreements. In the cases where they have yearly agreements the rents have fallen much lower than where they have leases. In the latter case I must say that the landlords have been very liberal under the circumstances, and they have made reductions, but they are still too high and above what they would be if they were held under yearly agreements.

2731. Have leases been prevalent in your district?—Yes, they were formerly, but they are not so much now.

2732. But taking cases where there was no lease, what has been the fall in rent since 1870?—I should say probably from 20 to 30 per cent. in very many cases.

2733. But in spite of that considerable reduction you say they have not fallen to the point at which they were before the rise?—In this case I daresay they would. In the greatest cases of reduction there is no doubt in the world in some of the land where wheat and things which are at a great discount are grown they may have fallen below the prices prevailing 30 years ago, but on a great many holdings they are not back to that point.

2734. Then you say that a considerable number are still under lease?—Yes.

2735. There it has depended wholly on the consideration of the landlord whether the rents are reduced or not?—Yes.

2736. And the landlords have in many cases reduced the rents?—In almost all cases I may say they have been reduced. I hardly know an exception—in fact, I do not know an exception.

2737. Has any land gone out of cultivation in your district?—No.

2738. Are farms easily let still?—Yes.

2739. Is there a demand for farms?—Yes.

2740. Are there men forthcoming with capital to take them?—Yes, but with a very reduced capital to what used to be the case. I should think there is no difficulty in that way in getting good tenants for the best farms, but on the holdings which are less desirable they do not always get very desirable tenants, but they are easily let. There is no difficulty in that way.

2741. Should you say at present rents or at reduced rents, or is it only where the farms were vacant, that they make the reduction?—The rents are reduced in every case very considerably. I think, if I may be allowed to suggest one very great point, it is that in the case of rents where the greatest reduction has been made, it has been to the new tenant where the old one could not possibly obtain it. I have known many cases of that sort.

2742. You have known many cases where the land has been re-let at a lower rent than has been conceded to the sitting tenant?—That is so, and that has been exaggerated in this way, that a new tenant very often comes and bids the old rent, and he begins to pull the farm the very first year and he gets his rent reduced by reducing the value; he loses nothing, that is where the mischief comes in.

2743. A new tenant has come in, paying the same rent and perhaps more than the old tenant, and after a year, or even within the year, he gets the rent reduced?—Yes.

2744. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You said he began to "pull" it?—Yes, he runs no risk of leaving any of his own capital behind.

Land courts.

2745. (*Chairman.*) You are then of opinion that the rent should be determined by an independent authority?—In the case of sitting tenants, I can see no other way of doing it.

2746. Not in the case of an incoming tenant?—In the case of an incoming tenant you may have some other provision. If a tenant could have the value of all his improvements, and also compensation for disturbance, I think he would be in a position to make his own terms; but, without that, he would not be in a position to do so.

2747. But take the case that you have mentioned, namely, of a tenant who coming in and paying the same rent, or higher, than the outgoing tenant, and who within a year afterwards asks for a reduction of rent, do you think in that case he should have his rent determined by a tribunal?—If he had taken it on his own basis and had turned out another tenant, I do not think that he has any ground for consideration.

2748. And you would distinguish such a case as that from an ordinary sitting tenant?—I think in justice you should; perhaps it may be difficult in practice to make that distinction.

Leases.

2749. In the case of leases do you think that the leaseholder should appeal to a tribunal for a reduction of rent?—Yes, I think so; because in many cases they were forced into those leases under special conditions. It was the only safeguard at the time.

2750. What special conditions do you refer to?—I think I may mention my own case. I happen to be in that unfortunate position of having a long lease, and it was simply this, that at the end of every term there seemed to be excuses for raising the rent; and on the second occasion of the renewal of the lease, without any reference to the state of agriculture, after having made a hard bargain when things were looking up, we anticipated that they would go on improving; and if I turned out I should have left everything that I had on the farm; the farm was as well farmed as anyone's could be, and for my own protection I took a long lease. I can give you the dates and the per-centage that was put on the farm.

2751. (*Lord Cobham.*) How long was the lease?—21 years.

2752. (*Chairman.*) When did you have the last renewal?—In the year 1878. In 1868 I took the farm, and made a very hard bargain, and I had to take it over at 30 per cent. advance, and I considered the matter settled, and went on and spent my money rather freely. At the end of 10 years—I took it on a 10 years' lease—another 23 per cent. was demanded; and although I should have left everything on the farm that I had spent money upon if I went out, I decided to go. I was met by a slight concession that turned the scale, and I was induced to stay on; and I took it at 17 per cent. rise for the 10 years between 1868 and 1878, for which there was no just excuse.

2753. You undertook your leases in 1878 under conditions in which, I understand you to say, that you could not resist the unfair treatment?—That was so.

2754. The conditions were that you could not recover the expenditure that you had laid out for improvements on the place?—That was so.

2755. That was before the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes, that was before the Agricultural Holdings Act.

2756. Therefore you were under a disadvantage?—Yes, I was under a disadvantage. I followed on from a lease that my father had taken 45 or 46 years ago.

2757. And the lease was entered upon just before the bad times?—Yes.

2758. And when you are still in hopes that things might improve?—That was so.

2759. And unfortunately circumstances have turned out the contrary; instead of improving it has been the reverse?—Yes.

2760. And you have found yourself landed in a heavy rent for 21 years?—My landlord has permanently altered that lease to a certain extent, and he is still making a temporary reduction now. Of course that is voluntary on his part, but it is still beyond what I think I should have the farm for; it is certainly beyond what it is worth if I were under a yearly agreement.

2761. What permanent reduction has he made?—To the extent of about 25 per cent., and I was at once rented 47 per cent. over what my father took it at.

2762. (*Mr. Channing.*) Was it a permanent reduction?—Yes, it was altered on the lease to that extent.

2763. (*Chairman.*) Did he give you a new lease?—It was simply a note.

2764. Is was a note endorsed on the back of the lease?—Yes, and it is permanent as regards that.

2765. Making a legal reduction for the remainder of that term?—That is so.

2766. And beyond that you have temporary reductions also?—In the last year there has been, but that still leaves it 25 per cent. beyond what my father had it at in 1847, after these deductions have been made.

2767. But you are comparing the present with 1847?—That would be so.

2768. Then you think that tenants under circumstances such as you are in should be relieved of their leases and their rents reduced?—That is so.

2769. By some external tribunal?—I think so.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

2770. With reference to the recommendations for the amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act, you say that you think there ought to be some further provision of security for the tenant, that he should be compensated for his improvements, and you have suggested that a valuation or schedule should be taken at the commencement of the tenancy as a record of the condition and state of the farm for the purpose of comparison whenever that tenant leaves?—Yes.

2771. That recommendation, I presume, would only apply to future holdings?—To future holdings. You could hardly make it retrospective, because of course you would have no record.

2772. Therefore it would not benefit existing tenants?—You would hardly act on that basis.

2773. Have you any proposals as regards existing tenants?—Well, the onus, it seems to me, must rest upon them to prove the improvements which they have made; but I think they should be compensated for all the improvements that they can prove.

2774. The onus must rest with them, however?—Yes.

Compensation for improvements.

2775. What changes would you make in the Agricultural Holdings Act with the view to better secure the existing tenant?—That he should have full compensation for the value of any improvements to be made. Really, I think, as these things are valued now, it seems to me always done on the score of expenditure. We all know where a tenant has gone in for improving his farm he has done it at a certain risk, and there are certain failures, but that is not taken into consideration in the valuation of the improvement. The value of the farm is more to the tenant after he has given it up than it was before he carried out the improvement. In carrying out that improvement he has a great deal of risk, and there are certain failures, and he has to bring his judgment to bear on making that improvement.

2776. The basis of the present Agricultural Holdings Act is the actual expenditure upon the improvement, I suppose?—It is the way those valuers would interpret it.

2777. And you think that the basis should be upon another principle—that of the actual value given to the holding by the expenditure?—That is so, and I do not think there is any necessity for the different classes of improvements. I cannot see why they are not all included under one class, and that it should be open to the tenant to make what improvement he chooses. It seems to me that he runs the whole risk, and if he cannot show improvement he will get nothing for it. It is the way it is interpreted in almost every case.

2778. In your experience, the valuers, as between outgoing and incoming tenants, never take into account more than the actual outlay?—That would be so.

2779. In your opinion they ought to go beyond that and to estimate the additional value given to the holding by the expenditure?—Yes.

2780. Have these two matters been discussed by your Farmer's Club?—Yes, and resolutions framed and sent up to the Central Chamber of Agriculture entirely on those lines, and they were unanimously adopted.

2781. Have they recommended a tribunal for the determination of rents?—Yes.

2782. As regards the sitting tenant, as I understand?—Yes.

2783. And not as regards the incoming tenant?—It was not specified in the resolution, but as regards the sitting tenant it is most urgently required.

2784. And your other point is to secure to the tenant the full value of his improvements?—Yes; and greater freedom of cultivation and sale.

Freedom of cultivation.

2785. Then the third point is the securing to the tenant a greater freedom of cultivation?—Yes.

2786. How far, in your opinion, should that go?—I cannot see that any restrictions are wanted if you have an intelligent agriculturist. It is not possible for a lawyer in his office, by restrictions, to teach him how to do it, and I think in my experience I have never known a bad farmer made into a good one by stringent enactments of that kind. I know an estate or two where they have full liberty to farm as they like, and I think the management of those estates will compare favourably with many others, and the farmers make the best of the land in those cases.

2787. Would you allow a tenant to break up pasture?—No, I would not. I provide for that in that proviso as to the altering of the holdings.

2788. That proviso was intended to cover that case?—It was intended to cover that case. I think it would be unreasonable if that were not provided for.

2789. Do you think that a tenant should be allowed to put up any kind of buildings?—I think so. If at the end of a lease it is shown to be unnecessary on the holding, the tenant could evidently recover nothing for it, or only the value of the materials. I can see no objection to it, the whole risk would be the tenant's.

Game.

2790. Now go on to the other points?—There was just one other matter that seemed to come under the land tenure part of the case, and that is the question of game. My chief point with regard to that is, and I think most tenant-farmers would agree with me, where the landlord kills the game for his own enjoyment I think it is a very desirable thing, and personally I am always pleased when I see my landlord shooting, and I am all the more pleased if he has a good bag; but where it is let to a third party it almost always leads to disagreement and annoyance and injury, and I would propose that: "Where "the owner does not retain the sporting rights for his "own enjoyment, before being let to a third party, "it be first offered to the farming tenant at a fair "natural sporting rent: And that agricultural tenants "be entitled to full compensation for damage by game "over which he does not hold sporting rights." I suppose that would be legal at present.

2791. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Who is to say what is the "fair natural sporting rent"?—What I mean is that it should not be estimated on the basis that a man could rear a lot of tame pheasants; but if you put a licence on it, it should only be a shilling an acre or something of that sort, it would not be so difficult to estimate. This same referee could do it.

2792. You say the rent is to be settled by some outside authority?—I think so. In cases of appeal, if you had a provision of that sort, in 19 out of 20 cases the landlord and the tenant will settle it themselves, but I think it is necessary to have something of that sort behind it. These provisions would seldom interfere between landlord and tenant, where they both desire to do what is right.

2793. (*Chairman.*) I understand that you do not object to the landlord reserving to himself the right of shooting the game?—No, I should be sorry to see that interfered with.

2794. But in the event of the landlord not being anxious to keep the sporting right, but to part with it to a third party, then you think the tenant should have the preference?—I think so. It is a very annoying thing to see third parties going over the farm and killing game. I will illustrate a case which I know is annoying a set of tenants. There are two estates close adjoining me, and one of them has the game let to a gentleman in Bristol who preserves pheasants to any extent, and he shoots those pheasants two or three days in the year, and the sporting in the district is very much injured on that score. I look upon that as a very important point, inasmuch as it tends to empty the houses in the district.

2795. Supposing that recommendation were adopted would the tenant have the right of letting the game?—I see no reason why he should not, if it is let at all. I think that the man who occupies the land is the proper one to have it. It can be no advantage to the landlord to let it to anyone else; if it could be shown that it was I should hesitate. I should interfere with the landlord's rights as little as possible, but if the tenant is to let it he is likely to be less annoyed with the person to whom he lets it himself.

2796. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) And if the tenant lets it is he to let it at the best rent he can get, or is it to be let at a rent which is to be fixed likewise by an outside tribunal?—If it is to be fixed by an outside tribunal he should also stipulate the way.

2797. Which is it to be?—He should let it himself.

2798. At the best rent that he can get?—That would be at his option I should say.

2799. I only want to know?—It is a point on which I do not feel strongly as long as the tenant is not placed in a position of being annoyed.

2800. In that case where the tenant is to let it you contemplate that in some cases the tenant himself should sublet it. I want to know whether in that case he is to be allowed to let it for the best rent that he can get, or is the rent to be fixed by somebody else? It is a very simple question?—I think he should be allowed to use his own mind. I do not see any reason for interfering with him in that case.

2801. (*Chairman.*) What I rather gather to be your view is that presumptively the game should go with the farm?—Yes.

2802. And you think that the landlord should have the right of taking it himself?—I do.

2803. But if the landlord does not take it you think that the tenant should have the option?—I think that it would be to the advantage of agriculture, and more likely to provide sport for gentlemen living in the district, and I think it is a desirable thing when landlords live in the district and shoot over their own estates, thus they are brought into contact with their tenants.

Local rates.

2804. Now, what is the next point?—The next point is the matter of taxation. The unfair burdens placed on land require immediate attention, and I would suggest that a first and immediate remedy be sought by the imposition of a van and wheel tax for the maintenance of roads, which was previously so weakly abandoned. The adoptive Acts, such as Lighting, Drainage, Water, &c., should not be chargeable on land that derives no benefit from them, and greater contributions to local rates generally should be contributed from the Imperial Exchequer, as affecting the nation at large. With regard to these adoptive Acts, I have a case in point, which has made me feel it rather heavily. I am living I think a little more than a mile from a village with 1,000 inhabitants. Some years ago it was decided that they should have gas in this village, and we had a rather clever lawyer in the place who worked things out very accurately, and he naturally wanted to make as many people as possible pay in order to relieve himself; but he found by taking the whole parish he would be outvoted in his requisite two-thirds majority, so he took in a smaller area where he ran no risk of being outvoted. My farm is situated nearly a mile from the last gas lamp, and I derive no good from it, and I have to pay those gas rates, which is very unjust. They are at the present time bringing in water to that village, and they might try the same thing, but I am in hopes that the Public Health Act is different in that respect from the Lighting and Watching Act, and that we may be able to stave it off.

2805. I think under the Public Health Act land would be excluded?—I think there is a provision for that.

2806. What I understand you to say is that the same provision should be extended to the Lighting Act, and other Acts which would involve expenditure which is not for the benefit of the land?—Yes. That is a very hard case indeed that I have to pay for those gas lamps in Milverton, which are not of the slightest advantage to me.

2807. That does not touch the general question; it is a special point of considerable interest, but not one touching the whole question? —It would not affect all cases alike, but in the parish of Milverton, it is so.

2808. Have you any other recommendation touching more generally on local taxation?—I think that schools, and lunacy, and the poor law, and roads, and different things should have larger contributions from the Imperial funds.

State subventions in aid of rates.

2809. Have you derived any benefit from the subventions?—Very little indeed. It seems to me that subventions are looked upon by the authorities as money which must be spent for carrying out extra work, and it has proved of very little advantage to the ratepayer, and I think of very little advantage to the community at large, although those people who have the spending of it would argue otherwise.

2810. That does not seem to be much inducement for Parliament to go further in the same direction?—No, and the great evil is that it is handed over for too specific purposes. I should quite agree with you that in handing over Imperial taxation some provision is necessary that it should not be treated as outside money. There is a tendency amongst local spending bodies to treat Imperial revenue as so much money gained. It should be handed down to local authorities to spend on the understanding that if they spend more they should find it themselves.

2811. It would be scarcely worth while to go further in that direction unless there was some change in the system so as to induce the local authorities to make the best of it?—We can hardly take that view. I do not say that we derive no benefit, but it is very much minimised by the way in which it is spent.

Railway rates.

2812. What are your further recommendations?—As to preferential railway rates. We say that in no case should preferential rates be allowed on foreign as against home produce, and a simple form of mileage rates for agricultural produce and requirements should be obtainable. Wherever railway charges are made we have very great difficulty in finding whether they are the legal rates or otherwise, or how they compare with others. The whole thing wants simplifying to ascertain whether there is an agreed charge made, and it should be more distinctly defined.

Labelling of foreign produce.

2813. What else do you wish to say on that question? —That all foreign produce should be labelled, and that dealers in such should declare themselves, in such a way as to give the least chance of frauds being perpetrated by the sale of foreign for home produce. The next point is with reference to the transfer of duty from malt to beer. The transfer of duty from malt to beer has acted prejudicially against home-grown barleys by encouraging the use of these foreign barleys as against those of more bulky home growth, and a re-transfer would greatly benefit the growers of English barley. I have one other item; shall I read it?

Beer.

2814. Yes?—It is that with reference to foreign substances used in beer. All beer brewed by the use of substances other than malt and hops should be definitely declared, both by the brewer and retail seller.

Fixing of rent.

2815. Adverting for a moment to the question of fixing the rent are you of opinion that the rent should be fixed for any time?—I think it would be better to leave it, and to allow either party to appeal when they thought it had grown out of proportion to the times.

2816. You contemplate the possibility of revising the rent?—It should be fixed for some term. It would be rather vexatious to have it revised every year. I think it should be every four or five years.

Valuation.

2817. You would put it at five years?—Yes. It would be vexatious to have it continually altered, I think. There is one other matter I wish to make a strong point of which has been passed over by the chairman. May I advert to it? It was a matter of valuation at the end of a tenancy. That is a matter that has grown into a very great abuse, and instead of two valuers who are competent going in prepared to make a fair valuation, and ascertain the improvements it seems to me that they go in on the score of two horsedealers trying to see how they can get the most out of each other, and in many cases they take two or three or four days, spending their clients' money, over that which ought to be settled by two competent men in a fourth of the time. In those cases I see no reason whatever why where a tenant feels himself competent he should not act; he would not act more as an advocate than those men do at the present time, and he would not be incurring the expense of these other men. It has been simply a matter of robbery the way these men conduct their business, and people are afraid to set the valuers at work. I could give you an example to illustrate what I mean. It was the case of a small farm adjoining my own, and a certain gentleman was put to value it for the outgoing tenant. They made a very hard bargain, and on a valuation of 120*l.* they spent 47*l.* odd in valuation. The landlord had not attended at the time of the first valuation, but he had attended subsequently, and one of the three gentlemen engaged in the first valuation valued for the outgoing tenant and was now valuing for the incoming tenant, and the landlord naturally thought that he would take his own figures. But the valuer said "so and so has happened since that," and the result was that about 10*l.* or 15*l.* out of the whole valuation was left for someone besides the valuers.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

2818. (*Lord Cobham.*) One of the great objections to the Act is the great cost of working you say?—The cost of working. I see no reason why the tenant or his agent should not act as their own valuers and have a referee over them.

2819. (*Lord Vernon.*) Do you see any reason why there should not be certificated valuers, and that one man should not do the work?—I think there is no reason at all why that should not be done. I think that would be better. I should have no objection at all to leaving it to one man. Of course the landlord and his tenant may choose to come to a settlement without any expense whatever. I think they would in a great many cases. That is the only objection. I think that you might even save the expenses of that one man.

2820. When you took your farm you did so thinking it would be a great advantage to you?—I did it simply because at the end of every term it was made an excuse to raise the rent. In the last case it certainly was done without any other reason.

Leases.

2821. Do not you think it would cause a great outcry if you passed an enactment breaking existing leases?—I do not see why it should. If you are dealing with a fair adjustment and regulation of land, it seems to me that that goes in with the whole thing; it is no more unfair than the other would be.

2822. Why should you break leases for agriculturists and for no other class of the community?—Simply because agriculture has been found to be in such a depressed state, and where those leases exist which are unreasonable it cannot be possibly any advantage to anyone that they should be maintained.

2823. Supposing a man has a cotton mill and he finds his industry ruining him, is he also to have the power of breaking the lease?—He entered into his lease without being hampered in the same way as an agricultural tenant would be. As I explained just now, the agricultural tenant has hardly any option. He would not be quite a free agent.

2824. But you distinctly took your farm on the understanding that it was an advantage to yourself?—That was so. I thought it might be. It was the only means I saw of protecting myself; at any rate that was more the point of it.

2825. Do not you think that it would meet the grievance if it was made illegal to make future leases for longer than a certain length of time—say, three, four, or five years?—That would not affect existing leases.

2826. What you suggest is to benefit those who hold disadvantageous leases?—I have a provision which I advocate, that in any dispute between the landlord and tenant they should appeal to the referee, and I do not see why it should not apply to a leaseholder as well as those under yearly occupations.

2827. (*Mr. Elton.*) You want to pass from a state of contract to status?—Judicially.

2828. Or an obligation imposed by the law?—That would be so.

2829. And then in that case in such a vast change as that taking place you would sweep in those existing leases which might have been made not knowing that a great change was going to take place?—I think so.

2830. I want to know; you spoke about the rent varying from 1*l.* to 2*l.* per acre. Does that represent the difference between the hill land and the valley land?—Yes, and the wheat land and the lighter barley land. I would illustrate that by my own holding—the home holding which I represented I am paying considerably more for than I did some years ago. On the other hand I have just taken an off farm from the same landlord. That farm is of a different character—wheat-land—and that would be considerably less.

2831. That would be rather in the nature of the hill land?—No, not hill land; it is wheat as against barley land more, but it would apply to hill land as well.

2832. I want to bring out the circumstances. You live in the fertile valley of Taunton Dean?—I suppose it goes by that name, I am afraid it has not been so.

2833. There are 26 parishes in the valley?—Yes, I think I am within the vale.

Restrictions in leases.

2834. I quite understood what you said about legal restrictions not being any good if they are broken by the whim or caprice of either party to the contract. Have you any example of such vexatious clauses being put in?—I can speak of our discussion at our farmers' club the other day. One tenant farmer, Mr. Bruford, he was a man who stood up on the landlord's behalf, and the only defence he could make of it was that although he had a lease and had all those restrictions in it he continually broke them and did it systematically, and that he was not interfered with. That was the only defence he made.

2835. Then I also understood on the other side of the question that you except alterations in the character and permanent condition of the holding?—Yes.

2836. That is so?—I would not allow pasture to be converted into arable or orchard, or an orchard to be let down.

2837. I want to bring your answer out in its full light. Instead of contract you may take the rule from the law of waste?—That is so.

2838. That is to say waste as the offence of changing the permanent condition of the thing?—Yes.

2839. And you would not do away with the law of waste, but with the restrictions of contract as usually found, because you think they are old fashioned?—That is so. To give an instance: In a small farm I took the other day I suggested to my landlord when I took a previous agreement that I generally grew a surplus of straw and that I should be allowed to market it, and that I would undertake to bring back the values in cake or some other fertiliser. But the other day the agent had been employed in making a lease and I find I am compelled, although spending more than my rent in feeding stuffs every year, to sign the old agreement, that is, not to sell the straw. This is only a yearly agreement. I was assured that I should be able to do it, but I was compelled to throw over the contract or sign that condition after holding a previous one on more enlightened conditions, and having spent the amount of my rent in feeding stuffs every year.

2840. I suppose, as a matter of fact, and putting aside the rather slighted position you were in, that has always been allowed in that neighbourhood?—I do not think that it is reasonable that it should be asked to be inserted—that we should be asked to sign what we do not intend to carry out.

2841. There is a change taking place on that point?—In my case the change is rather retrogressive.

2842. When we were much younger, a landlord used to go to the Court of Chancery and say that someone was threatening to move straw into a neighbouring town?—There was some reason for that when there was no other means of fertilizing the land when the straw was taken off. I understand the reason for those proceedings in olden times.

2843. Not very olden times, but quite recently?—But when originally enacted there was no other means of fertilizing the land when the straw was once taken off.

2844. That would seem to be the explanation why the Court adopted those rules in a previous generation before the artificial manure came in?—Yes.

Shooting rights.

2845. About your sporting; your general principle is, that sporting would go with the farm, and that a good measure of the value is the amount of rate at which it is assessed; you say 1*s.* or 6*d.* an acre?—Yes.

2846. That would be no more than evidence of the value, not the measure of the value. You merely use it as an illustration?—Yes.

2847. In practice, there would be great difficulties, because the shooting is generally in the coverts adjoining the farm and not on the farm itself, and it is no good for a person having one part of it without the other?—But I think that the farming tenants should be considered first, and I think the only advantage in the game, and in having the game laws, is, as I said just now, to provide sport for gentlemen living in the district. I think, if it was not for that the game laws would be indefensible.

2848. I am not contesting what you say, but am only bringing out the details. I want to know what happens when the farms adjoin on to a great wood. Have you thought what provisions should be made for the coverts adjoining the farm?—It seems to me that the game in the coverts should take its own chance and must not trespass. If a landland does not like to include shooting to his tenants, I think the game should take its chance, and that the owner of the game should not allow it to trespass any more than any stock would be allowed to trespass.

2849. But my meaning was, on the other side of the hedge. I want to know whether the farmer was to take the covert-shooting as being a necessary incident?—Not necessarily an incident of sporting rights. I think if a landlord chooses to exclude the coverts from the holding he has a right to do so, and I should like to interfere with his rights as little as possible.

2850. Of course it is a subject that would require a good deal of information?—It is desirable that the tenant should have it, but I do not think it is a necessity.

2851. I gather that you have got an opinion?—I think if it is let to anyone else it would still be likely to cause a great many disagreements.

2852. In fact there is in that part of the country, I gather, a very strong feeling against those casual sporting men?—There is a very strong feeling and it causes a great deal of annoyance. It not only causes annoyance to the tenants on the property, but it interferes with the general sporting character of the country and is a great injury to the neighbourhood in that way.

2853. I gather from that, and it is within my own experience, that there is rather a practice of letting the sporting rights by word of mouth to people coming rather casually?—I do not think it would be a practice. I do not think you can carry it so far as that.

2854. I thought you gave some instances?—I spoke of two considerable estates that are close by me, where there is a grievance in that way.

2855. Do you happen to know whether they are in most cases let by documents, or by verbal licence?—I think the case that I spoke of last, of those young men coming to the shooting, to the annoyance of the tenants. I do not think it is let at all; it is given them.

2856. By verbal licence?—I think if it is given to anyone, it belongs to the tenant in the one case, and in the other case it is rented somewhat highly.

2857. I suppose if not reserved it belongs to the tenant?—It is always reserved in all leases.

Mr. S. Kidner.

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2858. The people with only a verbal licence going to shoot, they would not be tenants; they could not prosecute for trespass?—I should think not. That is not one of the grievances at any rate.

2859. It is more of an annoyance strangers coming from elsewhere and taking game off the land? It is to this class of sporting rights that you object?—I think so very distinctly. I see no advantage of the game laws on those lands.

2860. You have no objection to the landlord rearing his pheasants, and you do not consider it a burden, but you object to the people who come from a distance?—I think that people would put up with a great deal from their landlord. I have that same feeling for my landlord, and when he shoots on my farm I am always pleased, and the bigger bag he has the better I am pleased, but I should not like it if it was a stranger shooting if I had not the first chance of shooting.

2861. Especially if he made a kind of trade of it?—Especially if he made a kind of a trade of it.

Beer duty.

2862. (*Mr. Everett.*) The only question I have to ask is with reference to what you said as to your idea that we had better get the beer duty transferred back again to the malt. You are aware that the malt duty was transferred to the beer in 1880?—Yes.

2863. And since that time there has been a falling in the price of all the articles of produce on the farm?—Yes.

2864. In wheat and barley, meat and wool?—Yes.

2865. Which do you think has fallen the least of those articles?—Probably barley.

2866. Is it not a curious thing then when we see that that product has fallen less than any of the others that we should find fault with that change as if that change had been the cause of reducing barley?—I do not think so, because the fall in the price of barley was almost immediate on the transfer of the duty; and beyond that I think the area in which good malting barley is grown is very much more limited than that of any other grain. There is probably no other country in the world, generally, that grows it so good, and we are not so open to foreign competition. If left with the previous permission my own impression is that the barley would not have fallen if the duty had not been transferred.

2867. It is the fact that barley has only fallen half the number of shillings per quarter lower than wheat has since 1880, and not anything like the same percentage as wool has fallen?—That is so, but I am inclined to think it is one of the things that would have fallen very little, and it is a direct injury to the agriculturist, and I do not think that it is any good to anyone, only the Chancellor of the Exchequer will obtain so much more revenue.

2868. Have you found any difficulty in making a good price of the very best barley?—We have as good as we can grow it. I can tell you that I have made as much as 49*s*. per quarter on my barley, and this year I have only half a crop, I thought of very fair quality, and I have only made 33*s*., and I do not think that the short crop has influenced the price at all. The short crop in England seems to have no effect whatever. I do not think we have sold the same quality of barley for any better price in previous years.

2869. You have not as good a quality as we this year, for the best is making 40*s*. with us?—I thought it was pretty good. It is as good as in the average of years.

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30 Nov. 1893.

Size of farms.

2870. (*Captain Thomas.*) What is the size of the farms in your district?—They would vary from 150 acres; but the majority would be from 250 to 400 or 500 acres.

2871. Which has suffered the most—the small or the large farms?—I should say the small farms, and they are generally the worst managed, I think.

2872. Is your landlord a large owner of land in the district?—Yes, he owns a great deal. He is a wealthy man generally.

2873. Do you find, as a rule, that tenants on large estates are better treated than those on small estates?—I think so, and I think among the older families you have generally more liberal treatment.

2874. How are the farms let; are they let by tender or otherwise?—Otherwise generally, seldom by tender.

Agents.

2875. Are the estates fairly well managed?—You mean as regards the agents.

2876. I mean to say, are they practical agriculturists?—I cannot say everything I should wish to say about them. It is rather a personal matter. I do not think there is a great deal of satisfaction given in that. The agents in a great many cases are certainly not popular with the farmers; very much otherwise in a great many cases.

2877. And naturally that is a grievance?—It is, I fear. It is a growing one, I am afraid.

2878. Do you think that that has something to do with the cry for the courts?—That is so.

2879. That those men who manage estates at the present time are not practical, and they cannot give satisfaction?—In a great many cases they are more like sharp men that are put in to do the best they can for the owners of the land, and in a very great many cases they have not had to make their living by farming, and know nothing about it practically.

2880. Are solicitors generally engaged?—Not much. You do not have the most complaints against them.

Reduction of rent.

2881. What has been the average reduction of rent in your district?—I think I mentioned from 30 to 40 per cent. That would be from the highest times.

2882. Are the farmers able to pay the rents at the reduction in rent?—Certainly not; for some years I think the tenant's capital has decreased, and this year with small crops, it would be a very serious matter. I do not think any rent can be made this year.

2883. Are the rents regularly paid?—I do not think that they are in a great many cases. That is one reason why rents are taken in order to keep the tenants, and it is also a reason why I think tenants do not come forward, that they are not in a position to do so in a great many cases.

2884. How do the farmers manage to pay rents—those who do pay?—By good cultivation and drawing on their capital in a great many cases.

2885. Have they got much capital as a rule?—Yes, I should suppose years ago you would have found as much capital on the farms in our district as in many other districts. I can give an illustration: When I took my farm, which I occupy, from my mother it was over 20*l*. an acre; it had been valued by my uncles who had no interest in making it more than it should be and there would be a great many other farms—the best farms on the best land—where the farms would have had as much, but if we reckon it up now it would be very much reduced.

2886. Do you think that the land is as well cultivated as it was 20 years ago?—All the best farms are.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

Seventh Day.

Friday, 1st December 1893.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., in the Chair.

The Right Hon. Baron Vernon.
The Right Hon. Henry Chaplin, M.P.
Sir Robert Nigel Fitzhardinge Kingscote, K.C.B.
Robert Giffen, Esq., C.B.
Charles Isaac Elton, Esq., Q.C.
Captain Owen Thomas.
Francis Allston Channing, Esq., M.P.
John Clay, Esq.
Robert Lacey Everett, Esq., M.P.
John Gilmour, Esq.
George Lambert, Esq., M.P.
William Cutlack Little, Esq.
Walter Hume Long, Esq., M.P.
Charles Whitehead, Esq., F.L.S.

Herbert Lyon, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. Crawford, Esq., } *Assistant*
Freeman Thomas, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. Samuel Kidner recalled and further examined.

Mr. S. Kidner.
1 Dec. 1893.

2887. (*Mr. Channing.*) I think you said yesterday that you came as the representative of the Taunton Farmer's Club?—That is so.

2888. And that consists of how many members?—From 130 to 140. I am not certain, it is considerably over 100.

2889. You can claim to speak in a representative position to a certain extent?—Yes.

2890. What you expressed to us yesterday represents the views of a number of other farmers in that neighbourhood?—Certainly. We had a meeting on Saturday week, when almost the whole of these matters were discussed, and I may say we were unanimous in our decision.

Reductions of rent.

2891. You said, I think, about the rent of your own farm, that you hold a lease, that it was still, with the present reduction of about 25 per cent. more than what it was 50 years ago?—That is so.

2892. Do you think that anything like that would be the case on the other farms in the same district?—In some cases it would be, and in some cases, on wheat lands, they would have gone below that. Mine is more a light land, a barley farm more.

2893. The yearly tenants of course have been in a better position to make bargains for obtaining reductions?—Certainly they have of late.

2894. And I think you said that their reductions have been greater?—Yes, that is so.

2895. But still, even in their case, I think you said that the reductions in the case of the renewal of an agreement with the sitting tenant have not been so great as in the case of farms being let to new tenants?—Yes, greater reductions have been made to new tenants, and a great many of the old tenants have succumbed to men who have come and taken the farms at greatly reduced rents, or obtained them shortly after the tenancy began.

2896. Do you know instances of tenants who have done their farms well and kept them up in fertility, have been refused reductions which have been given to other tenants who have not done their farms so well?—I think I can show where they have been unfairly treated; but you want farms on the same estate, would not you, to show that, because the reductions differ on different estates.

2897. To put the question in another form, so far as reductions are concerned, should there not be rather an equivalent of the market value than what the tenant has done to the farm?—That is so. The greatest reductions have been made on the worst managed farms.

Mr. S. Kidner.
1 Dec. 1893.

Compensation for improvements.

2898. Is it your opinion that where a similar reduction has been made, to a certain extent the compensation which must be due to a tenant who has worked his farm well, for what he has done to the farm, is confiscated by the landlord?—Certainly, and the maintenance of the rent has been due to his management.

2899. That is to say, what the tenant has done to his farm in improving it may be confiscated by the landlord refusing a sufficient reduction as well as by an increase of the rent?—Certainly, that is so.

The scheduling of holdings.

2900. Your remedy for that state of things is to have the condition of the land accurately scheduled at the beginning of the tenancy?—Yes.

2901. And to have a tribunal of reference starting from that schedule of condition?—Yes.

Official referees.

2902. Have your club formulated any proposal as to what the tribunal should be?—Well it was proposed that it should be a popularly appointed referee in certain districts; the districts should not be too large.

2903. Do you mean that you would elect an agricultural arbitrator for a district in the same way as a county councillor?—You would have the same constituents, they would not be all interested; it should be the people interested who should have the election.

2904. But are you aware that it has been suggested that the Board of Agriculture and the county council should jointly appoint a list of such arbitrators for each county, and that the tenant and landlord should be free to choose under an amended Act an arbitrator from that official list?—No, I was not aware of that.

2905. Would you approve of such a suggestion?—I think that may do.

Cases of hardship.

2906. Could you produce other cases besides your own in which the leases have operated unfairly?—I could produce them, but they are difficult to obtain.

2907. I will put this question. In your experience are there cases in which hardships have occurred where there is a reluctance on the part of the tenants to state their case, and to identify their farms from a fear of incurring the displeasure of their landlords?—Certainly that is so.

Compensation for disturbance

2908. You spoke of compensation for disturbance in addition to the tribunal?—Yes.

2909. Have you formulated that in any way?—The strongest point is perhaps that any tenant in anticipating a change of holding, has at the same time to face the loss of quite 10 per cent. of his capital, inasmuch as there are certain expenses attending the sale and disposal of the stock, and we all know that upon entering upon a farm there is a reasonable margin for other expenses.

2910. And that 10 per cent. would have to be faced in losing the goodwill?—That is so, and having to go into a fresh district in middle age or at advanced life, to make fresh friends and associations.

2911. The whole of that makes a very strong money and practical consideration for a farmer in settling the terms of renewal of his agreement?—It certainly does, and a tenant puts up with a very great deal before he faces all those things.

2912. In your opinion has that led to farmers on a renewal of their leases, paying a considerably higher rent than they would have done if protected by some compensation for disturbance?—Certainly it has.

Land court.

2913. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Would a court of appeal between landlord and tenant, or an outside tribunal, excite any feeling between the two?—I think not.

2914. You do not think so?—I do not see why it should, and I think that ultimately it would create a better feeling between landlord and tenant, inasmuch as each would have a chance of getting fair play.

2915. I suppose there is no difficulty in letting farms in your neighbourhood?—No.

2916. Are there more farmers than farms?—I should say there are.

2917. And therefore you advocate this protection because there is more than one farmer endeavouring to get one farm?—That is so.

2918. You said that rent had been paid largely out of capital, do you think that that is continuing now?—I should say so, to an exaggerated extent this year at any rate, and taking into view the very disastrous summer we have had.

Reduction of rent.

2919. And you look upon an immediate remedy to the tenant farmer from a reduction of rent?—Yes.

Arrears of rent.

2920. Are there many arrears of rent in your district?—I should think there are. They continually crop up where you should have least suspected it, and that leads one to think that it prevails to a considerable extent.

2921. Would arrears mean that there has been too much rent paid for the farms in the past?—I think very likely.

Shooting rights.

2922. You spoke about the game yesterday. Would you advocate the ground game belonging to the tenant?—I think that is very satisfactory as it is at present, when the landlord and tenant both have the right. That is as the law stands, is it not.

2923. Would you give the farmer the right of killing ground game as he pleases on his farm?—Certainly.

2924. You think that the law should be amended in that respect?—I think so; I do not see why he should have any restriction. I do not think it would create any evil if it were taken off.

2925. Your proposal is to give the tenant the first option of having this game on the farm?—Yes.

2926. I presume that you have had cases in which a sporting tenant has come in and carted away game from the agricultural tenants' farms?—Yes, we have one very strong case almost adjoining me.

2927. You said yesterday that the agreements might be enforced although they might be relaxed?—That is so very often at the end of a holding.

2928. Therefore they can be enforced at the option of the landlord?—That is so.

Official referees.

2929. With reference to the referee, you advocate a popularly elected referee. What would you mean by a popular election?—That the people who are interested in his employment should have some voice in his election.

Reduction of rent by official referees.

2930. (*Mr. Little.*) You propose that the rents of sitting tenants should be revised by an outside authority?—In case of appeal.

2931. That is to say, where the landlord and tenant do not agree, I presume?—Yes.

2932. Your rent has been reduced to a point lower than that at which it stood before your recent agreement?—Yes.

2933. You pay less rent than when the depression began?—Yes.

2934. And the reduction has been made, notwithstanding the lease, voluntarily by the landlord?—Yes.

2935. Do you think that a land court or a popularly elected referee would have done more than your landlord has done voluntarily?—Yes.

2936. And that in the face of the competition which you admit is going on for farms?—Yes.

2937. Supposing that the farm could be let readily to other tenants at the present rent; do you think that a popularly elected referee would be able to reconcile his conscience to reducing the rent below what a tenant would give for it?—I do, in the view of getting full compensation for my capital, and just compensation for disturbance.

Compensation for disturbance.

2938. But disturbance is, to a great extent, a sentiment?—To a great extent, it is, but to a very great extent, it is actual, inasmuch as I explained just now that when a tenant is leaving his farm he may lose 10 per cent. on the change. It is material in that case.

2939. Do you contend that a tenant who hires a farm for a definite period acquires a right to that farm for all time?—A certain right. I think it should be open to the landlord to resume it at any time that he chooses, but he should compensate the tenant for the loss sustained by the change of tenancy. I do not think that a man will satisfactorily farm his land unless he has some assurance of that kind.

2940. Is it not a thing that the landlord may take into consideration when letting the farm whether he shall have it cultivated properly or not?—Unfortunately it is hardly so with the law of distress. Bad and good tenants come into competition, and the bad tenant is put into competition in the matter of rent, and that bad tenant intends to come in and rob the farm, and take what he can out of it.

Law of distress.

2941. If the law of distress were altered, do you think that the competition would be so much lessened that landlords and tenants would then take into consideration that the farm must be well farmed?—It would have some influence in that direction, certainly.

Reduction of rents.

2942. You admit that rents have been reduced in your neighbourhood according to the circumstances of the case?—Yes.

2943. That, where owing to the nature of the cultivation the crops have diminished most in value, the reduction has been greatest, and where more profitable crops have been grown, the reduction has been less?—That is generally so; on some estates the reductions have been much more liberal than on others.

2944. You made some distinction between the case of the sitting tenant and the future tenant. I think you were prepared to leave the future tenants to take care of themselves?—Then the future tenant opens on the bargain with a free hand.

2945. And the present tenants, you think, do not?—Certainly, they do not.

2946. They must have come in at some time or other?—Hardly, in my case; I almost grew there.

2947. But still there must have been a beginning of the tenancy?—Well, there must have been; but it is almost in the form of a continuation.

2948. Every one has a beginning as a tenant, and comes in as a future tenant will come in?—As regards the tenancy, you can hardly take it so in my case, I think.

2949. You draw a distinction between those who came in some time ago, and who have had possession a long time, and those who come in in the future?—There is a distinction, I think.

2950. I think you let fall an expression about an incoming tenant who had turned out another?—In some cases that is so.

2951. You do not adopt the phrase of "land-grabber"?—No, we are not Irish.

Freedom of cultivation.

2952. Now as regards freedom of cultivation of the soil and sale. I suppose that means the sale of produce, it does not mean sale of goodwill?—Sale of produce.

2953. Do you expect this to be provided for by enactment?—I think so.

2954. Do you think that the law should prescribe the terms upon which land should be let?—I think if land were to be cultivated to the best advantage by an intelligent tenant, he must have the free use of the land, and the landlord is protected, you would be able to get rid of the tenant if he does not farm it properly.

2955. But you would interfere between the landlord and the tenant, and say that the landlord shall not agree with the tenant to put the land to a particular use?—I think that is necessary.

2956. And you would apply that in the case of sitting tenants?—Yes.

2957. That concession would be valuable to them?—Yes, I think so.

2958. If when you had been taking your farm on a new lease, you had stipulated for such terms, do you think that your landlord would have asked more money?—Well, that hardly affected the case, seeing that they were taken in times of inflated prices, and now under any conditions the rents have to be reduced.

2959. Suppose you had been bargaining some years ago, and you had said "Now I want to sell and "grow what I like, and do what I please," do you think the landlord would have asked more rent?—I do not think that you could have done so, for the landlord would not have granted it.

2960. Should you have been prepared to pay for the privilege?—No, I use that privilege now; at the same time, I do it at my own peril.

2961. I would not put it in your individual case; but do not you think people treating for a farm in the neighbourhood of a town would consider the circumstances whether the produce was saleable or not—whether a certain amount of produce would be allowed to be removed or not?—I do not think that it would affect the case if the landlord was protected from deterioration of the farm.

2962. I want to know whether you think that the landlord in making a bargain would ask more. It is not a question whether he would be protected, but whether he would ask more?—I can hardly conceive the case, because hand-in-hand with that I put in compensation for deterioration. I cannot see how it affects it in that case.

2963. Of course if you will not admit it, I cannot go any further. What I want to ask you is this. Would not the landlord ask more in letting a farm under these conditions, than under the ordinary conditions?—Where they have freedom of sale in that way I do not think that the rents are higher under those circumstances, but I think it is fair to say he would not ask more.

2964. Do you think that a farm lying near a town where the sale of hay, and straw, and roots is permitted makes any more rent than a farm in the same position where no privilege of that kind is allowed?—Yes, it makes more rent on account of its position being close to good markets.

2965. But I say that two farms in the same position, near to a town, in one case where the straw and hay is removed, and in the other case the tenant is obliged to consume it, would not the landlord ask more in that case with the condition of removal than in the case of the condition of consumption?—It would be worth more.

2966. And the tenant would give more?—It would be worth more; that would be a fair assumption.

2967. You propose to give over to the tenant something that he has not bargained for, which is valuable, and which he does not give money for?—Yes.

2968. And that is conveying part of the landlord's property to the tenant?—I do not see that, because the landlord is not injured by it.

2969. If it is something that he has to sell, and you give it to the tenant, is not that depriving him of it?—I should put it on the ground that it belongs to the tenant, and the landlord is withholding it.

2970. It would not belong to the tenant if he hired the land under other conditions?—He did it under pressure; he was not a free agent.

2971. It might be the case with some, but surely not with the majority of tenants. You are looking at one case where a man like yourself is induced to remain, and a case where a high rent is paid for the purpose of keeping the holding, but the ordinary tenant must be presumed to go in with the understanding of the conditions under which he is farming?—Yes.

2972. And you admit that he would give more, and his farm is worth more, if he is allowed to remove the produce than if he is not?—There would be no good in advocating it otherwise.

2973. Then it is entirely for the benefit of the sitting tenant?—And for the well-being of agriculture.

Compensation for improvements.

2974. With regard to compensation to tenants for improvements, you are aware now that what you propose is the law, and that compensation by law is given on the value of an improvement to an incoming tenant?—On certain classes of improvements.

2975. Well, improvements that are compensated for under the Act?—Yes.

2976. It was a matter of complaint in your evidence that the compensation was given on the cost, and not on the basis of value?—Yes.

2977. But you have discovered that by the Act it is to be awarded on the basis of value to an incoming tenant?—I did not know that that was so.

2978. Supposing it were upon cost, is not prime cost the most reasonable basis for compensation?—In very many cases; in the case of manures and feeding stuffs, I take it, it is the only basis. But there are other things than manures, such as laying down pasture, and draining, and different things, in which there may have been a great deal of skill and judgment displayed, and I think there is something beyond that in certain cases and certain failures that have to be anticipated.

2979. In the great majority of cases, is not the improvement one that the landlord or the incoming tenant could carry out at his own cost?—Well, in the case of permanent pasture he could hardly do it, which was the case I had in my mind.

2980. That is the case where you say the letting value, the value to an incoming tenant, is a proper basis of compensation?—It is a continually increasing sum.

2981. And there you think that the prime cost requires addition in respect of interest, and, on this ground, that the tenant has not had full time to recoup himself?—I do not think the ground that the tenant had not full time to recoup himself has anything to do with it. It seems to me to be what property he leaves for his landlord.

2982. But surely he is using the landlord's material when he lays down the grass?—He rents the raw material of the landlord for his use. He pays rent for that.

2983. You cannot separate the improvement from the land?—Certainly not; that is just why the tenants want protection.

2984. The improvement without the land is worth nothing; the land without the improvement is worth something?—Certainly it is.

2985. And the tenant is using the landlord's land?—Certainly.

2986. And if he has an opportunity of recouping himself will he not be willing to spend his money?—Certainly; but there is no reason if he does that that he should not be compensated to the full value of his improvement. I am not arguing that the land in its original state was not the landlord's, and I am not arguing that he should have the full value of the land as he leaves it, but only the value of the improvement.

2987. That is secured by the Agricultural Holdings Act, or should be so?—I think so.

2988. It is; but would not you say that the compensation on the basis of cost is the best for the tenant?—It is very difficult to ascertain. I think that it is very much better estimated by results. It goes over a length of years and it may be manured year by year, and there may be no manure, so that I think it a better basis to go by results.

2989. Does not the tenant sometimes spend money on improvements which are not very successful?—Certainly he does.

2990. Is he not, so far as he is concerned, more secure when he receives compensation for money that he has spent than when he is paid for actual results?—He may be; but in that case you would compensate the man with bad judgment equally with the man who laid it out with a great deal of judgment, which I do not think is desirable.

2991. Surely a valuer in valuing the improvement would take into consideration whether the work had been done with proper judgment?—But in that case it is "heads I win and tails you lose." If you exercise

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your judgment, and receive nothing for it, and another man spends more money than he should have done he would have so much deducted according to your argument.

2992. I beg your pardon. If he spends the money with judgment he would receive it back again minus that which he had already received by the use of it?—I do not see where the use of it comes in. I think it is what he leaves there.

2993. If a man has let his farm to a tenant who enjoys the benefit of it for a number of years he has had the use of it?—He has had the use of it; but if he makes a wise speculation I do not see why he should not enjoy the benefit of it.

Compensation for disturbance.

2994. You did not give us any idea with reference to disturbance as to the way in which you would measure the injury to the tenant?—I think that should be left to the referee. It would be chiefly on a money value. There is the sentimental consideration which I indicated, but it would be difficult to place a money value upon that, perhaps. Certainly there is a definite money loss, and he would have to anticipate that.

2995. Would you base the compensation solely on the loss which is occasioned to the man by removal and by depriving him of something valuable?—I think so. It should be done on a liberal scale in view of the other circumstances; but it is difficult to place a money value on a sentimental consideration.

Compensation to the landlord.

2996. You said that compensation should be secured to the landlord for deterioration. How do you propose to secure that?—On the basis of the schedule that would be made at the commencement of the term. If various fields were left in a worse state than they were found at that time to that extent the tenant would be liable.

2997. But that is not securing the money; that is securing the principle that the money should be paid. But how do you secure it from the tenant who has farmed the land badly?—How is the tenant going to get it from the landlord?

2998. But there is something left with the landlord?—It is not fair to assume that the tenant has nothing left, I suppose.

2999. The land is the security, is it not, to the tenant?—Not necessarily. It does not always belong to the landlord unhappily. In many cases you will find that it is mortgaged to its full value and beyond.

2999*a*. Have you ever known a case where the tenant has failed to receive compensation due from the landlord?—No, I do not think so.

Official referees.

3000. With reference to the referee, you propose that a popularly elected referee should decide certain cases, and should go over farms to ascertain the value?—Yes.

3001. I did not exactly catch how this referee was to be popularly elected. What is the machinery?—I have not indicated that. I prefer that it should be left on a broad basis. I should prefer a popular element. Mr. Channing has suggested that the Board of Agriculture have a scheme in contemplation. I daresay it may meet the case.

3002. (*Mr. Channing.*) I did not make that suggestion. I said that it had been suggested that the county council, with the approval of the Board of Agriculture, might make the appointment?—It is a matter that wants a little more threshing out.

3003. (*Mr. Little.*) But still you have proposed the principle of popular election for the appointment of referees?—That is my opinion that it would be the most desirable way of electing him.

3004. You think that this man who would be placed in a judicial position should be popularly elected?—Yes.

3005. Would you give him office for a definite term or for life?—For a definite term, so that if he failed, as may possibly be the case, he may be replaced.

3006. And would you pay him a salary, or would you make the parties who called him in pay?—I would make the parties who called him in pay chiefly. I think all that would be necessary would be to fix the fees.

3007. Do you think that a popularly elected referee would be tempted to court popular opinion?—I do not think so. My experience has been that when a man is put in a position of that sort, such a man as would be elected, he is put on his mettle and generally does what is fair and right.

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Arbitration.

3008. You referred to the expense of arbitration. Is not the result of any interference by the State between contracting parties to formalise and make more difficult the settlement of the compensation?—Yes.

3009. It is a natural result?—It is a natural result, but I think that there is room to exemplify it in view of the existing state of affairs.

3010. But the Agricultural Holdings Act requires an expert to interpret it?—It does. It is very much too complicated. Very few farmers understand it, or have ever read it.

3011. Does not it lead to complication between the parties?—I think it is unnecessarily complicated.

3012. I will not go into the particulars, but you admit that it is a necessary consequence of interference between parties that the procedure is made more formal?—Yes.

3013. It is generally more prolonged?—I do not think it should be.

3014. You spoke of the old system of valuation which I think you said was something like horse dealing between valuers on one side and the other?—Yes.

3015. That was a rough-and-ready way of settling it without much evidence?—I am speaking of the present system of arbitration in mentioning that.

3016. Surely not under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Very few cases came under the Agricultural Holdings Act, but where that is used as a basis for the agreement it is not so.

3017. The difficulty is not with the Agricultural Holdings Act, but in not using the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I think that it is a weak point in the procedure that I mentioned. I do not see why, where a tenant feel himself competent, he should pay a man for the valuation; why not act for himself.

3018. The parties can act for themselves?—I do not think so; it must be an indifferent. They can act if they mutually agree; otherwise it must be settled by an "indifferent" party.

3019. Parties may agree as to the amount of compensation?—They may agree.

3020. Then they may act?—If there is a mutual agreement between the landlord and tenant, but if they cannot agree and they have to go to a formal valuation, each of those parties has to appoint an independent authority.

3021. "The landlord and the tenant may agree on "the amount and mode and time of payment of compensation to be paid under this Act. If in any case "they do not so agree, the difference shall be settled "by a reference." Then, "where there is a reference "under this Act, a referee, or two referees, and an "umpire, shall be appointed as follows:—(1) If the "parties concur, there may be a single referee "appointed by them jointly": that is to say, they may agree if they please, or appoint a single referee?—If that is so, that meets the case. My impression is that if they failed to agree, and went into it as a matter of arbitration, the two "indifferent" persons would have to be appointed. That word comes in the Act somewhere, I think.

3022. Have you had anything to do with arbitration under the Act?—Not under the Act—under the agreements that prevail at the present time, I have.

3023. You know probably that before an arbitrator or umpire can make an award he must examine witnesses and vouchers that he could not possibly satisfy himself without?—Yes.

3024. That all means expense of course?—Yes.

3025. And possibly you are not aware, but you may have heard that arbitrators make a lawyer draw the award?—Very often it is so, I know.

3026. It is a very dangerous thing for a man who is not a lawyer to draw it?—Yes.

3027. And it might lead to litigation and still further expense?—Yes.

3028. Therefore the expense of arbitration under the Act is a necessary consequence of the State interference?—Yes, and I think they are unnecessarily complicated.

Compensation for improvements.

3029. (*Mr. Long.*) I wish to ask you one question arising out of the evidence you have given. I understood you to say that you thought it would be better that compensation should be based on the results rather than upon the expenditure?—I think so.

3030. How would that affect the experiments frequently made by occupiers which are justifiable at the time, and which in 10 or 15 years—take a shorter or longer period—turn out to be complete failures?—If it is of no value to the landowner, I do not think the tenant is justified in expecting anything from it; he has made a rash speculation and an unfortunate one.

3031. But if the speculation could not be described as rash at the time that he made it, surely it is not properly to be described as rash because subsequently it turns out a failure?—He leaves no value, and I should not give him anything.

3032. Would you limit actual compensation to where he leaves actually improved results?—The value of his improvement.

3033. Improved results?—Improved results, or what the land would let at more for his improvements.

3034. But supposing that the land that he has with those improved results on it is of less value in the market, how is his improved result to be arrived at?—There would be none.

3035. Then in other words supposing the farm let at a lower rent the tenant would have no claim?—The lower rent may be due to worse times.

3036. How is the value of the land to be arrived at? What is the value of the land?—By the schedule the farm would be scheduled, and that would be used as a basis, and the value based upon that. You cannot get it by rent inasmuch as times vary so.

3037. What is the value of the land, if rent is not the value of the land?—It is the value of the land, but without those improvements it would have dropped so much more.

3038. In your opinion the improvements may be considered as permanent, the land being still more increased in value?—That is so.

3039. Is not that a very difficult claim to make?—I think it would be simpler than the present form if holdings were properly scheduled and a short description given in each case.

Rent per acre.

3040. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I think you said that the farm you held was three hundred acres?—It is 340 acres.

3041. What is the rent per acre that you are paying?—Just over 2*l.* Well, it would not be on the whole of it; the home farm, the 240 acres, is just over 2*l.*; the other lying off a little distance, I have retaken at something under 30*s.* an acre.

3042. Some part of it you have taken under 30*s.* per acre?—I have just taken it; I have not actually entered on the tenancy of it. The home farm is about 2 guineas an acre.

3043. Is the rent that you are paying now part of it 2*l.* an acre, and part of it 30*s.* per acre included in whatever reductions have been made?—Not whatever reductions, but what is a permanent reduction. In the last year I received a 10 per cent. reduction on the home farm beyond that.

3044. I suppose the outgoings upon the farm are very considerable altogether in the working expenses?—Something like 10*s.* or 11*s.* an acre.

Cost of labour.

3045. Is your labour bill heavy?—Yes, it is 600*l.* or 700*l.* a year.

3046. Then the labour bill alone is very nearly as much as the whole of the rent on your farm?—Yes, I may say as regards that that 140*l.* or 150*l.* would be due to my growing flax which I have worked in the winter; it amounts to almost 8*l.* per acre, the labour on it, probably. It is a good piece of flax.

3047. In addition to that you have a large expenditure of money in artificial manures?—Yes, as large as my rent, beyond that if you take artificial manures; there is no question about that.

Receipts and outgoings.

3048. What proportion does the rent bear to the total outgoings on the farm?—I find that unless I make about 2,300*l*, or 2,400*l.* gross I cannot get on very well.

3049. What proportion does the rent bear to the whole outgoings of the farm?—That would be included.

3050. Including everything, when you have made up your accounts, what proportion would the outlay be to the rent?—There is 622*l.* about, or 624*l.*, about one fourth—that would hardly be so; that would include my own living. It would not be so much as that.

3051. (*Lord Vernon.*) You mean it is less your profit?—Yes, less my profit when there is any.

3052. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) It would be about one-fifth, perhaps?—That would be more like it,—one-third more it would work the other way.

3053. No, I think not?—It would work the other way if you took it at 2,000*l.*

3054. Your living would be a decided outgoing?—But that is included in the 2,300*l.* or 2,400*l.*

3055. (*Lord Vernon.*) If you take gross profit it would be included in the 2,300*l.* or 2,400*l.*—if you take your own profit out of the 2,400*l.* it leaves the total outgoings?—It would make 600*l.* as against 2,000*l.*

3056. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Clearly the expense would be part of the outgoings of the farm. I understand the gross outgoings are something like 2,400*l.*, including your own living?—No. I was wrong in that—that would be the gross income that I was estimating, the gross outgoing would be more like 2,400*l.* probably.

3057. (*Mr. Elton.*) Your gross receipts are about 2,400*l.*?—That is what it should be.

3058. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) It is not the receipts that I am endeavouring to arrive at?—The outgoing would be more like 2,100*l.*

3059. The labour bill is practically as much as the outlay on cake and artificial manures is as much or even more than the rent; of course there are numerous outgoings besides, which I have not entered into, and I want to arrive as clearly as I can, at what proportion does the rent bear to the whole annual outgoings on the farm—I think it comes out something like one-fourth?—A little over one-third—between one-third and one-fourth.

Low prices.

3060. I think you stated earlier in your evidence, that in your judgment the principal cause of agricultural depression was the great fall in the prices of agricultural produce?—Yes.

Reduction of rent.

3061. And that the chief remedy was the reduction of rents, where they have not been reduced already?—Where they have not been sufficiently reduced already.

3062. In many cases I think you said they had been reduced as much as 40 per cent.?—In some cases, and on some estates the reductions have been much more liberal than on others.

3063. Of course, they vary considerably?—They vary considerably.

3064. What further reduction do you look to, to be adequate to relieve the pressure?—I can see no reason at the present time, why my rent should be more than it was 30 or 40 years ago, there is nothing to justify it.

3065. I am not speaking of that particular rent; but generally speaking, about the district from which you come, what reduction do you think would be adequate to relieve the pressure?—You could hardly take this year as a standard, because it is due to bad seasons; but in a great many cases we have not been liberally dealt with. I think another 20 per cent. at least should be taken off the rent.

3066. And that you think would relieve the agricultural depression?—To a very great extent, I do, in fact, I think we might try to struggle on with that reduction.

3067. I quite understand in the case of this farm, which appears to be highly rented at the present time, that you individually might gain substantial relief. May I ask you with regard to those farms where the land is very much inferior to yours, are you of opinion that a reduction of 20 per cent. would be a remedy for agricultural depression?—In purely agricultural districts, where they have been allowed to go out of cultivation, that is quite another matter. We have nothing of that sort of thing in our district.

3068. When you speak of a remedy for agricultural depression, you would be more correct in saying that it would be a considerable relief to the tenants in your particular district of England?—That is it.

Compensation for disturbance.

3069. You have given your views on the question of land tenure, and I understood you to say that you are an advocate of what you describe as compensation for disturbance?—Yes.

3070. Will you state exactly what you mean by that? —Well, in the view of a man not being able to stay on his holding, either from not being able to get his rent properly adjusted, or because the landlord wants to remove him from any cause whatever, except in the case of bad management, which I will always except, the tenant necessarily sustains very great loss in turning out of that farm, inasmuch as in marketing the whole produce of that farm he anticipates extra expense in going to a fresh one; in the majority of cases he loses quite 10 per cent. of his capital.

Compensation for improvements.

3071. Do you mean to say in the case of a tenant who received full compensation for his improvements for everything that he has expended, that he necessarily by leaving undergoes a great loss for which he ought to be compensated?—Yes, beyond those improvements he necessarily sustains a great loss, except in accidental circumstances. There may be accidental circumstances, but generally speaking, it is always the case.

3072. Who is to estimate that loss?—I think the referee.

3073. On what?—The referee or any other tribunal appointed that would be better fitted to estimate it.

3074. But you had, in the case of this farm, I suppose, when you entered upon it, made your bargain with the landlord; you were under the impression that you were making an agreement favourable to yourself?—I cannot say as much as that. I had to take it under very vexatious conditions, and I entered on the lease out of desperation with the chance of getting fair play. That was really my state of mind, and it was at a time when agricultural prospects had been looking fairly well, and we were in hopes of it still going on improving.

3075. But on first entering, I suppose you made an original agreement?—No; my father came there when I was six months old.

3076. You succeeded your father? — It was my mother's afterwards, and I managed it for her from almost the age of 15, and afterwards I took it of her.

3077. Either your own fortune, or the fortune you expected to succeed to, was already invested in that farm?—That was so.

3078. Your position is that of a tenant who makes a bargain originally for himself?—I was bound to do so.

3079. This principle which you advocate is to apply not only to your own case, but you advocate it for general adoption?—Yes.

3080. May I take the case of an ordinary tenant who is making an agreement for entering upon a farm, and I suppose that when he makes that agreement, you would say, as a general rule, that he does so because he thinks that it is advantageous to himself?—Yes.

3081. In many cases it is the fact, is it not, that there are numerous applicants for a farm at the same time?—Yes.

3082. You will admit, will you not, that a farmer who is selected from a number of applicants *pro tanto* obtains an advantage from the landlord?—That would be in certain cases looked on in that way.

3083. And the other parties whose applications are refused are placed comparatively in a disadvantageous position?—It may be for their good, but I have no doubt that that is the view they take of it.

3084. We will suppose that he held the farm for a certain number of years, and ultimately has to leave? —Yes.

3085. During all those years he has had the benefit of his advantage which has been refused to his competitors?—An assumed advantage.

3086. At the end of that time the gentleman who has had this advantage is to receive compensation, becauses it ceases; do you propose under those circumstances that the gentlemen who have not had the advantage at all should be compensated too?—Certainly not.

3087. Why not?—This man took it on the assumption that he would get fair treatment as long as he paid a fair rent and managed the farm properly. I think that is a fair assumption, but when treated otherwise, I think that he has some claim in the way I indicate.

3088. The man who took it took it on the understanding that he would be holding, subject to the conditions on which he took it?—Yes.

3089. And one of those conditions was that if he left the farm he should receive compensation for unexhausted improvements, and for his outlay, the benefit of which he had been unable to reap. If he gets that what further claim has he?—If you treat him as an individual he probably would not have a very strong claim; but considering the case of agriculture it is very much to the advantage of agriculture that that man should manage the farm highly and add improvements if he had security in that way.

3090. You base it entirely on the advantage to agriculture?—It would be on the chief points you indicate; but in a case like my own there is something beyond that.

3091. Your case is the case of a farmer who enters upon a lease?—Yes.

3092. And I think in your evidence you stated that the conditions of your lease were such that you could not recover the expenditure that you have laid out for improvements on the place?—Yes, that is so.

3093. Why did you enter into a lease on such an unbusiness-like arrangement, if you will forgive me for saying so?—In the first place I entered at the end of a 21 years' lease which my father took it at—these clauses for compensation were unknown almost at that time and the use of artificial manures was practically unknown. It is the system that created it in the interval, and you would not recommend any man to adopt or think it desirable that I should not adopt those new and improved methods; but at the end of that term the tenant finds a certain residue left in the soil which he cannot obtain, and almost his only resource is to keep on the farm, and try to work on it. Therefore, I say that you are not quite a free agent.

3094. At what date was that?—The farm was taken in 1847, and the lease expired at the end of 21 years, that would be in 1868, would it not?

3095. You say at the same time you undertook your lease in 1878?—In 1868 and 1878.

3096. And in 1878 the conditions were that you could nor recover the expenditure that you have laid out for improvements?—That is so.

3097. Do I understand that up to as late as 1878 in your part of the country compensation for unexhausted improvements was unknown?—In many cases it was; but on entering on the agreement in 1868 I was not a free agent, and the landlord was not a man with modern ideas; he was antiquated in his ideas; he thought they were correct. Being antiquated and not very enlightened, I am inclined to think if I had asked I could not have obtained a modern agreement with those clauses for compensation, at the end of 1878, when I found myself in this position.

3098. Your views are somewhat biassed on account of the treatment that you received individually?—Those things make an impression upon us; but there are similar cases; it is not an isolated case.

3099. Is that the general position with regard to landlords and tenants in your district at present that the conditions of their leases are that they cannot claim for improvements?—Now they have the Agricultural Holdings Act, and it would not be a legal agreement or it would not hold under the Agricultural Holdings Act, but until that Act was passed it was very generally so.

3100. Was there no custom of the country?—Very little.

3101. There was some?—You could not call it a custom of the country; it was so seldom used that it could not be described as a custom of the country.

Abolition of leases.

3102. In one part of your evidence you stated that where farms were held upon a lease, you thought that in the time of adversity when things turned out unfavourably for the tenant that the lease ought to be broken?—I think it ought under present conditions, but I do not think we should see any leases at all under an improved regulation. My idea is that the necessity for leases would be done away with.

3103. Should you approve of the converse proposition that where there has been a time of prosperity the leases ought to be broken in the interest of the landlord?—The same should apply; either should be open to appeal to the referee I think for either an increase or decrease in rent.

3104. That would practically mean the abolition of leases altogether?—I think so.

The fixing of rent.

3105. You said also that there ought to be an outside tribunal for the purpose of fixing rents; was that to apply to all tenants?—I think so but I can hardly see how you can settle the question of disturbance without it.

3106. On what principle are the rents to be fixed?—By valuation I should say.

3107. Yes; but on what principle is that valuation to be made; what do mean by a fair rent?—A rent at which a man with good management would be supposed to be able to live on the farm, and obtain a fair return for his outlay.

3108. What do you call a fair return?—What the miners would call a living wage.

3109. I do not know what a living wage means, and I have not been able to ascertain what it means; but perhaps you will tell me what your idea of a fair return for a tenant's outlay would be?—If a man takes a farm and invests 5,000*l.* or 6,000*l.*, I think that judicially he should be entitled to receive a fair living for that and good interest for his money.

3110. What do you mean by good interest for his money?—It would vary with the times. We have to do without any at present as far as I can discover. That would vary with the times. I do not think you could fix that now for 20 years hence.

3111. I want to ascertain what your idea of a fair rent is and how it is to be fixed, and upon what basis. You say to me in reply that it should be fixed on such a basis that a man should get a fair return for his outlay—a fair interest for his money; I want to know what per-centage you consider is a fair interest?—Ten per cent. he should be able to obtain if he works his capital as he should do.

3112. Ten per cent. is very great interest to obtain on very good security?—Hardly; if a man lays out 5,000*l.* or 6,000*l.* and gives his time to the farm I do not think it is too much. A great many people connected with breweries get far more without employing any of their time; they simply hold out their hand and get it, and the farmer puts his own time and judgment into his work.

3113. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Would that be remuneration for his own labours?—I am including that; it is a difficult thing to finally check that.

Legislative interference between landlord and tenant.

3114. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What grounds would justify the interference of the legislature to say in the interests of this particular class only, that until they have made 10 per cent. on their money the relations between the landlord and the tenant must be interfered with by law. Do you propose to limit the application of the principle to tenant farmers?—We have only to deal with tenant farmers; you can hardly give an answer till a case occurs. Tenant farmers are situated in a very peculiar position inasmuch as they necessarily embark very much of their capital in the soil which is inalienable from that soil, and I think it is in the interest of agriculture that every encouragement should be given to the investment of that capital in the soil.

3115. You think, in the public interest, this experimental step would be justified of forbidding the landlord by law from selling the use of his land at the best price that he could obtain?—Yes.

3116. Because it is a matter of great public interest?—I think that it is justifiable.

3117. You will admit that it is a matter of great interest that the public should be able to obtain their food cheap?—Certainly.

3118. On the same ground, would you apply that principle to the tenant and forbid him by law from selling the produce of his land at the best price that he could obtain?—That is quite another matter; he manufactures that article, as it were.

3119. Why draw the distinction between the landlord and tenant?—Because it is due to his action and production of the article. You can almost put it as the manufactured article, whereas the land is the raw material on which he is to work, and is a part of the country.

3120. But neither the landlord nor the tenant could call it manufactured without the capital of the landlord on the one hand and the capital of the tenant on the other, and if your interference by law is justified by public interest in the one case, why is it not justified by public interest in the other?—If you apply it to the sale of agricultural produce, you will have to apply it to all manufactured articles throughout the country, but, as I explained, why it is justifiable in the interest of the tenant is because he is in this peculiar position—that he has to embark his capital in the soil, and it is inalienable from the soil; the farmer's produce is open to the competition of the whole world.

3121. When you draw the distinction between the manufactured article on the one hand and the raw material on the other, is it not absolutely the case that the land in its present state partakes very much of the nature of a manufactured article; would there not have been an enormous amount of capital employed in placing the land in the position in which it is, which enables it to be profitable and bear crops?—Certainly. The great distinction is that the one is limited and the other is unlimited, and skill and competition keeps the one in place. The land in the country is limited, of course, but inasmuch as the products in competition with the whole world is limited, and no interference is required, the matter of competition keeps the public right. If I charge too much for my produce, the foreigner comes in and undersells me and keeps me in my place.

3122. But this does not answer my question. Why is the interference to be justified in the one case and not in the other? I am endeavouring to make it clear to you that land, in one sense, is as much a manufactured article as the product of the land, or rather the land that you receive from the hands of the landlord is a manufactured article. He has laid out very large sums of money in the erection of buildings and fences and drainage, and a variety of other works, which altogether equals the value of the land itself?—Yes.

3123. Having done that, why, on the ground of public interest, are you to forbid the landlord from selling the use of this land for the best price that he can obtain when you think it will be entirely uncalled for, on grounds of public interest, to forbid the tenant to sell the produce?—That comes more in the comparison of the tenant's improvements. It would be a fairer question, "Why do you forbid the landlord to sell his at "the best rent he can get, and at the same time let the "tenant sell his improvements at the best price that "he can." I do not press that he should allow the tenant, but that it should be valued.

3124. That is another question altogether?—It seems to me that is where the parallel comes in.

Official referees.

3125. You stated you thought that for the purposes of compensation a popularly elected referee should be appointed to schedule a holding, I think you described it, at the commencement of the term?—Yes.

The scheduling of holdings.

3126. Is that to apply to all holdings?—To agricultural holdings.

3127. Throughout the country?—I think so.

3128. It is a very large proposal of course; have you carefully considered it?—Yes. I do not think it would be in any way unworkable or more cumbrous ——

3129. Will you explain to the Commission how it is to be carried out?—It seems to me that a man who knows his business may go through my farm and value it.

3130. First of all, whom is the referee to be appointed by?—That is a larger point which I left somewhat open, and purposely. I should presume that the popular element should come in, and those interested in what he has to do should have a voice in the election. If he were appointed by any other authority he would do what is fair and right.

3131. That is a considerable proposal which you say you have carefully considered. I think you should explain to the Committee how you propose to carry it out, and the first natural question that I ask is, whom is this popularly elected referee to be appointed by, and for whom is he to do this work?—For the landlord and tenant for whom he makes the schedule, and I think he should be appointed by the tenants and landlords in the district where he is employed, and I should have no objection to the landlords having preferential or plural voting in the matter where they occupy more farms than one. I think that it should be done as fairly as possible.

3132. I do not want to know what you have objections to; I want to know what your proposal is which you say you have carefully considered—what is the precise proposal?—That you would take the area of the district council, that is a district which is contemplated, or you might make it take the area of the union, and there should be a popularly appointed referee within that district for a stated period. I should not put him in office too long, he may not be satisfactory, and I think in his election the tenants and the landlords in that district should have a voice.

3133. Very well; but then who is he to be appointed by and paid by?—Paid by the landlord and tenant conjointly.

3134. Who is to appoint him?—The returning officer would manage the election, I take it.

3135. The election; whom is he to be elected by?—By the tenants and landlords in the district.

3136. All the tenants and all the landlords in a given union then, are to have votes for the election of this referee?—I think so.

3137. Are they to have one vote, or is the landlord to have more?—I should think in fairness a large landowner should have more than one vote as against a tenant who occupied one of his farms.

3138. Then this referee having been appointed upon every change of tenancy or every entry upon a farm, what is he to do?—To compare the condition of the farm at the end of that tenancy with the condition at the commencement, so that his schedule that he has made should be used as a basis for another valuer whom the tenant and landlord may appoint.

3139. How is he to compare the condition of the farm with its condition at the commencement of the tenancy when the system itself is only just commencing?—I think it will be very easy to go through and schedule a farm, every field growing such a crop, in such a state, whether clean or dirty, or in a high state of cultivation or otherwise; I can see no very great difficulty in it.

3140. How long would it take him to schedule a certain farm in this way?—A day or two at the outside I think.

3141. And then he would make a record of its character, its condition, and its general cultivation?—I think so.

3142. And that would have to be done on every change of tenancy on every farm?—It would not necessarily be done by the official referee after it is once made, that is the basis.

3143. Where is the record to be kept?—The tenant and landlord should each of them have a copy of it, probably.

3144. It is practically open to tenants and landlord to do that at present if it is desirable?—Yes.

3145. Do you propose to make it compulsory?—I think it would be desirable; it may be optional for either of the parties to have it done.

3146. You have hardly considered the scheme sufficiently, I should think. At all events I am sorry to say that I am not able gather a very clear idea of how it is to be carried out?—It is attended with some little difficulty. I intended to have left it somewhat open; I simply indicated that there should be an outside tribunal.

3147. There, I think, you have succeeded very well?—I hope so.

Compensation for improvements.

3148. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) I think you said yesterday that while you considered the sitting tenant ought to have the benefit of a tribunal, you do not think that men entering their farms now should have that assistance?—You mean in the future.

3149. Yes?—Yes, for the future I think so.

3150. Immediately they get into their farm?—Yes, I think so, but it would be very evident that the compensation would be very much less if a man left his tenancy at the end of a year or two years to what it would be if he were there 20 years.

3151. I understood you yesterday to have said that you did not think that it should refer at all to the incoming tenant?—I did not intend that.

3152. As regards the sitting tenant you answered yes, and not as regards the incoming tenant?—The incoming tenant is treated as against the sitting tenant. I thought that was the light in which he was spoken of.

Official referees.

3153. In the election of the referee would not it, in your opinion, be a practicable way in every county to put it in the power of the man—in Scotland called the sheriff of the county, I do not know in England who it would be, perhaps the County Court Judge, that he should nominate, for a certain term of years, so many men whose reputation would be such as to allow them to take that position?—I think that would do very well, probably that is a better scheme. He would be open to receive representations of course.

Restrictions in leases.

3154. (*Mr. Clay.*) With regard to antiquated restrictions in leases, what is your experience in your own case?—I have one in my pocket which I was asked to sign on an off-lying farm which I took, and it was made by one of the principal landowners in the district. It was represented as being a very fair and reasonable agreement, and I may say that nineteen-twentieths of the tenants for whom he is agent, signed this same agreement. In fact, when I had this, I saw some of them, and this agreement was signed by men that I put down as men who ought to have known better. I went through the agreement and struck out half of it. They could hardly find fault with it because the whole of my objections were complied with; but at the same time nineteen-twentieths of the tenants on this estate signed this lease or something similar to it.

3155. You would not say that those restrictions were fair?—Certainly they are not. This lease is similar to a great many that tenants in the district signed. I was prepared to fight the matter, and the way I came by this document was, I asked the lawyer to make a copy, and this is the document with my marginal notes. (*producing the same*). Very much to my surprise I had not to fight it very much, but these objections of mine were met; but others complied with those requirements and signed a similar agreement.

3156. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You did not sign it?—I did not sign it.

3157. (*Mr. Clay.*) You say this was signed by others?—Very similar agreements equally objectionable were signed by others. I should not say they were word for word with this agreement.

Official referees.

3158. Regarding this official referee, you think it would smooth the difficulties between landlord and tenant?—I certainly do. I think it would improve their relations in most cases.

3159. It would be the means of bringing landlords and old tenants together if it were practicable?—I think so. He would very seldom have to act in the case of rent.

Compensation for disturbance.

3160. Regarding the compensation for disturbance, you look upon it that a person who has been 40 or 50 years settled down on a farm, to be a matter not altogether of sentiment, but that he has some just right to have some say in the matter?—I think so.

3161. And it would be beneficial both to the country and the landlord and the tenant?—I think it would be beneficial to all parties concerned.

Official referees.

3162. Mr. Chaplin tried to get information from you about how the person is to be appointed. I know in England you have not such machinery as we have in Scotland, of a sub-sheriff who resides in the county, and who knows all the best men who might be appointed as referees?—Quite so.

3163. You thought some machinery like that might be copied into England?—Yes, I think so, if such machinery as that would answer the purpose.

3164. It would be no hardship to the landlord?—I do not think so; if he was a fair man appointed and did what was fair, it would do away with a great deal of haggling and ill-feeling.

Freedom of cultivation.

3165. You live near the town, and you sell your produce there, and you pay a little more rent in consequence?—Yes.

3166. Is it not a fact that when they sell straw, they bring an equal quantity of manure, or perhaps more on the farm than they took off?—This is generally so, almost always so.

3167. Is it not a fact that on farms let near towns where they sell their straw, the tenants have opportunities of bringing manure on to those farms, and they

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are in a better condition than farms at a greater distance?—I think so. The town is generally built with pretty good land round it.

3168. Made from the tenant's improvements?—To a great extent, that is so.

Compensation for disturbance.

3169. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Your contention practically comes to this, that when a tenant has been in occupation of a farm for some time, whatever the law may say, whatever the agreement may be between the tenant and the landlord, it is like drawing up a partnership agreement, and you think that the tenant has an equitable right not to be disturbed?—I think he has a right.

3170. That by the force of events, and by the nature of things a kind of partnership grows up, and that the tenant has an equitable right against disturbance, that is what I understand you to contend?—And beyond that he sustains a pecuniary loss.

3171. You are aware that this is not a legal right, but you maintain that it is an equitable right, and it is a fair case for converting it into a legal right?—I think so.

Official referees.

3172. I did not quite gather from you when the referee was appealed to for how long a period the rent was to be fixed, or whether it was to be an indefinite period?—I should say for short periods of four or five years, and if any appeal were made, it would go on for that length of time. It would be vexatious to be open every year.

3273. There would be a minimum period?—There would be a minimum period which I should not fix at too long, say three, or four, or five years; it certainly would be vexatious to have them opened every year.

3174. And as regards the incoming tenant I suppose your view is that whatever rent he agreed to come in at, it would last for a certain number of years?—Certainly.

3175. And only at the end of that period he should appeal to the Court?—That is the idea.

3176. (*Chairman.*) How long would that last?—Three or four years. Not too long a period; I should like it to be guarded against being re-opened.

Compensation for disturbance.

3177. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Would not it be better met by giving fixity of tenure to the tenant, and right to sell, rather than to give compensation?—I do not think that, where a landlord wishes to resume his farm for any particular purpose, he may have a very disagreeable tenant next door to him; I think it would be hard to have to keep that tenant, but on giving him up and granting him compensation, the landlord may shift him. I am rather in favour of the view of compensation for disturbance.

3178. You think that the equity of the case will be satisfied if compensation were given for disturbance without going further, and having fixity of tenure?—I think so, the landlord should have an opportunity of resuming his farm when he chose.

Competition for farms.

3179. Then I think you have mentioned that at the present moment there was no difficulty in getting good tenants for the best farms?—That is so.

3180. That there are more farmers than farms?—Yes.

3181. Would it not be correct to say that that is one of the causes of depression as far as the farmer feels it, whatever may happen in fall of prices, with this excessive competition the landlord could let his farm at a high rent, because he would have the command of the market? How is this difficulty of excessive competition for farms to be met, supposing it to be a real cause of depression?—I suppose that these surplus men must find a world elsewhere, it seems the only remedy; two men can only live——

3182. It seems to me, that if this state of things exists, I do not see how almost any of the other causes of improvement could really be permanent, because of this excessive competition?—That is so.

3183. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) This surplusage of tenants does not exist everywhere does it?—My experience would not extend to other parts of the country—that would not be so, but in our district there is certainly no difficulty in acquiring tenants.

3184. Do you know whether it applies only to your own district?—It would be very extended. If you take the whole of the West of England, it would apply.

3185. The whole of the West of England?—I should say so.

3186. May I ask what counties you mean?—In Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall, I think you will have very great difficulty in finding a farm that is lying void there.

3187. (*Mr. Long.*) Is not Wiltshire included in the West of England?—I took the West of England to mean Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall, that is what we speak of as the West of England.

Local taxation.

3188. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) You spoke of the incidence of local taxation as being unfair, and that it pressed heavily upon the agriculturists?—Yes.

Van and wheel tax.

3189. Have you suggested any remedies for that?—We should have larger subsidies from the Imperial Exchequer, and I think it would be a very fair tax perhaps in the shape of the van and wheel tax, which we all thought would be passed into law, as we were told it was going to be passed; and I think almost every farmer was very much surprised that it was abandoned.

3190. That is the opinion of your Chamber and the district?—Yes, and it is a very strong opinion. It is a point which you very often hear mentioned. I know the van-owners were sending petitions from meetings, but I know the farmers generally looked on it in a rather amused light as having no argument in it, and no action was adopted by them.

Rates.

3191. Do you suggest a division of the rates between the landlord and tenant?—I do not see any advantage in that; I think in this case it would be an advantage to the tenant farmer, inasmuch as the man who pays the first has to pay somewhat the most; but beyond that I think it would lead to extravagance, inasmuch as the tenant farmer would not have the same interest to keep the local expenditure down as at the present time.

3192. And if agricultural depression were removed it would probably mean an increase of rent, would it not?—Very likely, I do not think that is a strong point.

3193. What is the present amount of your rates in the pound?—1*s.* 8*d.* for the half-year was the last.

3194. Would that be about the average, two 1*s.* 8*d.* rates?—It would be rather more than that because the next brings in a gas rate, and a school rate, which are not included in that.

3195. May we take it that the two 1*s.* 8*d.* rates are what you pay in the year?—It would hardly cover my rates.

3196. Could you tell the Commission what the rates were 10 years ago?—They have not varied a very great deal; they were very high 10 years ago—10 years ago you are speaking of now. I was going further back, they would vary very little indeed.

3197. I think you told us you had a reduction in rent?—Yes.

3198. Has that been applied through your Union?—Yes, I should not know a case where it had not been applied.

Assessment.

3199. Have reductions on the basis of assessment followed the reductions in rent?—Not generally. I am on that score getting a report from the Chamber of Agriculture at the present time, I appealed on that new tenancy, and the Assessment Committee absolutely refused to take rent as a basis, they simply compared it with other farms, and they asked me how it compared with other farms, and I said I was not concerned with that, that I had taken this farm in the open market, and unless they could show otherwise they were bound to accept the rent as a basis.

3200. So that the Assessment Committee have not made up the assessment corresponding with the rent?—That is so, and that acts very unfairly in the matter of land. I may say in the town of Wolverton a great many are assessed at very nearly half the value, and very nearly all the land is over the rent value.

3201. Will you tell the Commission what your assessment actually is?—On my home farm it is very nearly taken on the basis of schedule A. with the 10 per cent. reduction.

3202. Schedule A. in the income tax?—Schedule A. in the income tax.

3203. With 10 per cent. reduction?—Yes.

3204. (*Chairman.*) How does it compare with the rent?—It would be the rent on Schedule A., that is the general reduction.

3205. (*Mr. Little.*) Schedule A. is not reduced, do you mean?—Schedule A. is reduced at our Assessment Committee, they take A. as their basis.

3206. But I think that your assessment under Schedule A. is minus 10 per cent.?—My own particular case, the home farm, is very nearly that, but they do not adopt that as a basis generally, but go more by comparison of the rents in the district.

3207. If it is the Schedule A. minus 10 per cent., and Schedule A. has been reduced, then you are rated properly?—I have no grievance as against the home farm, but against this farm I have taken. I do not think it amounts to a hardship inasmuch as this property in the town is not nearly up to Schedule A.

Rate subventions.

3208. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) You said subventions were not much good, will you say how?—I had in my mind as regards that, more especially the case of the technical education grant. As far as I can discover in our own district the money has been almost entirely wasted. We have classes for wood carving, and cooking, and different things, and they are entirely patronised by the ladies of the village.

3209. (*Mr. Elton.*) And butter making?—That has done some good, that is the one exception; but generally speaking the subventions for those classes have been simply money thrown away.

3210. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) You are speaking of technical education only; but there are other subventions, for instance, the police and lunatics?—Well, there is just a case in that way.

3211. They have been applied to their proper purposes in those cases?—Yes. Well, then again, if you take the case of boards of guardians there is also a very great tendency in order to spend the money with very little consideration by increasing the salaries of officers from this Imperial grant. If it came from the local rates it would be dealt with in a different way.

3212. If you had more subventions that would be intensified?—Yes; but there is a general feeling that if there were more of it it would be applied better.

3213. Have you an idea of the actual amount of the subventions that are allowed?—As regards the schools there would be something over half, and the salaries of the union officers I know are very considerably in excess. In fact they are ruinous.

3214. Do you think that the farmers hardly realise the large amount of the subventions?—Probably not.

3215. Would not it be desirable that they should be published?—I think everything should be done to elucidate the facts, something of that sort is desirable.

Cattle disease.

3216. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) In your district have you suffered from cattle, or sheep, or pig disease?—Not very generally. In my own case neither the one nor the other; but I have had rinderpest and foot-and-mouth disease; but I have fortunately escaped the others.

3217. Has the question of cattle disease been considered by the Farmers' Club?—Yes.

3218. What is their opinion?—They are strongly of opinion that the most stringent measures should be used to keep it out of the country, and we are prepared to submit to very drastic measures when difficulties arise.

3219. Have you passed any resolution as regards compulsory slaughter at the ports?—No, I have not. In fact our Farmers' Club in the matter of discussion is almost a recent institution. We have been organised for some time, more in the shape of a co-operative society, and it is but recently that we have carried on any discussions.

3220. What is your own opinion?—That it would be a very good thing; I think it is quite necessary for the farmer, and that the consumer would lose nothing by it.

3221. You said yesterday that rents in your district ran from 1*l*. to 2*l*. an acre, and that the quantity of grass land was very nearly equal to arable?—Yes.

Fruit culture.

3222. Are there not extensive orchards?—Not so extensive as they would be in Devonshire, and it is not a growing industry. Orchards are not looked upon as generally very remunerative.

3223. Are orchards, as regards your district, much the same as pasture?—Yes, and they are generally valued at about the same rate as the best pasture, it is usual to value the orchard on the farm in the same way as the pasture.

3224. Not more than the pasture?—No, the best of the pasture land on the farm would be the usual valuation for the orchard.

3225. Is there much more flax than your own grown in your neighbourhood?—Very little indeed.

Competition for farms.

3226. You say that in your district, when the farms are vacant, there are always men ready to take them?—Yes.

3227. There is a competition for them, is there?—Yes.

Legislative interference between landlords and tenants.

3228. Do you consider that these men cannot make what they would call a just agreement with the owner of the land by themselves, and that they require either an enactment by the legislature or court to settle the agreement between them?—I think so. I think it would be desirable on all hands. It would lessen the friction, which always occurs in the case of a hard deal, and I think the present and future relations of landlord and tenant would be very much better and improved by having this appeal.

3229. You think that neither party has intelligence enough to settle the matter for themselves?—Intelligence enough, yes, but there is between dealers always a very great deal of haggling.

3230. And therefore you think that the legislature should step in to make agreements for them. But you know the legislature cannot possibly take into account the circumstances of situation, soil, and climate?—They can easily take that into consideration, any man who makes a valuation would take that into consideration.

3231. I thought you wished the court or the legislature to settle it?—A referee would probably be appointed, and if the court had to settle it it would refer the matter to some referee to make a report, I take it. They could hardly do it in London.

3232. (*Chairman.*) I thought you said just now that on the commencement of the tendency the new tenant and the landlord might be left to themselves to make what bargain they thought fit?—I think they are on equal terms.

3233. Then it is only when the tenant has been in possession for four or five years that he should have the protection of the courts?—Yes.

3234. (*Mr. Little.*) That was only as regards rent, I think, not as regards cultivation and sale of produce?—I did not include that, I think a landlord should not have the power of restricting the produce of the land by unfair agreements.

3235. (*Chairman.*) But I think that would be a matter of general law?—It is a matter of general law.

3236. You would not refer those terms other than rent to a special tribunal?—That is so.

The scheduling of holdings.

3237. You would or you would not?—In the case of a new taking I do not think that the referee would want to be called in beyond scheduling the farm to say the state in which it was found.

3238. The referee must inspect the farm in order to schedule it, and when that four or five years commences he may be able to determine what the rent should be?—Or to see what improvement have been made, if he had to value improvements.

Co-operation for purchase of manures.

3239. (*Mr. Lambert.*) You said just now that yours was a tenant farmers' club for the purchase of manures?—Yes.

3240. Has it been a benefit to the farmers to purchase in that way?—Yes, for almost twenty years. We buy all our manures by contract, with stipulated analyses, and every sample is analysed before we use it; it is always analysed by Dr. Voelcker.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. JOHN NOAKES called and examined.

3241. (*Chairman.*) You are a farmer living in the Tunbridge Wells district?—Yes.

3242. And you represent the views of the Tunbridge Wells Farmers' Club?—Yes.

3243. Is that a large association?—Yes.

3244. How many members are there?—I cannot tell you exactly, but somewhere about 150 members, I suppose.

3245. What size of farm do you occupy yourself?—My home farm where I reside is about 286 acres, and then I have marsh land to the extent of about 240 acres.

3246. How long have you held these?—Where I reside, I have occupied it for 33 years.

3247. What is that 240 acres farm?—It is all grass marsh land on Romney Marsh.

3248. Is it all grass?—It is all grass.

3249. What is that 286 acre farm?—My home farm is mixed, arable and hops.

3250. Is that near Sevenoaks?—Near Tunbridge Wells.

Low prices and foreign competition.

3251. You come here to represent the views of the Farmers' Club; will you tell us the views which they specially wish to put before the Commission?—Fortunately, in the neighbourhood of Tunbridge Wells we are rather peculiarly situated, and I must say we have no grievance particularly, except what I wrote the secretary some time ago, that we suffer very much from the severe foreign competition.

3252. From the low prices of your produce?—Yes.

3253. Do you attribute it to foreign competition entirely?—To foreign competition entirely.

System of cultivation.

3254. What is the general class of cultivation in that district?—Ours is a mixed system of cultivation; there are very few roots grown. Our staple article is hops.

3255. Is that what the farmers mainly make their profits out of?—Yes, almost entirely.

3256. Is it specially with reference to hops that you have come before this Commission?—Not particularly so. There is a considerable quantity of fruit growing in our locality.

Hop growing.

3257. Has there been any improvement in the case of hops during the last three or four years?—We have had a fairly good trade in hops the last three years; that is what I say makes our position in our locality rather peculiar; we cannot feel that we are so depressed as they are in many parts of the country, where it is grass and cereals entirely.

3258. You have had good seasons, and better prices for the last three years or four years, and thus have improved your position very much?—The growth of hops is not generally understood. It is very peculiar, but we have had fairly good years, because we have grown short crops. That is the peculiar position we are in. Previous to that, we had a very heavy crop of hops, and it was almost ruin to us, because of the foreign competition; that is where the foreign competition comes in.

3259. But the last three years on account of having rather short crops, the price improved, so that you have been fairly well off?—Yes.

Foreign competition.

3260. But I suppose there has been foreign competition?—Oh, yes, very severe.

Import duties.

3261. What suggestions have you to make on behalf of the Farmers' Club?—With reference to foreign competition, I do not think the state of things is to be remedied. Of course, there is only one remedy in our idea, that there should be some duty put on everything that is imported. But that is not practicable at all. We feel that there is no compensation given to the occupiers to lessen the cost of production.

3262. You think that everything should be done for the purpose of lessening the cost of production in order to enable you to meet the competition?—That is my idea. I do not suppose it is practicable as I say to advocate a duty to be put on hops, but there is no mistake, the public would not be affected in any shape or way, and it would be a great benefit in my opinion.

Reduction of rents.

3263. Has there been much reduction of rent in your neighbourhood?—Yes, there has been a reduction generally.

3264. What is the reduction?—I must tell you that our locality in the neighbourhood of Tunbridge Wells is a residential district, and perhaps you are aware that we are fortunate in having two or three very large landed proprietors. We have Lord Abergavenny for one, who has a large estate but rather a poor one, and we have also the Marquis of Camden, who has a very large estate. That is also a poor estate. The rents generally are very moderate. I suppose the average of the rents on those two farms would not be more than 12*s.* or 12*s.* 6*d.* per acre.

3265. And you consider the rents are very moderate?—Yes.

3266. Have considerable reductions been made?—There have been reductions; for instance, Lord Camden's rent audit was the week before last; his rents, as I tell you, are low, but, notwithstanding, he made an allowance of 20 per cent.

3267. But taking the last 10 years, has there been an actual reduction of rent?—There has been an actual reduction of rent of about 20 per cent.

3268. And you have not much to complain of on the score of rent?—No, my rent audit was on Wednesday in this week. In my home farm where I grow hops my landlord thought it would not require reduction. But on my grassland, where I pay a rent of four hundred and some odd pounds, my landlord without my asking him made me a reduction of 25 per cent. It was required, and rather more than that; it has been a very disastrous year.

3269. Is that on account of the drought?—Yes, and the low prices, the exceedingly low prices.

Legislative interference between landlord and tenant.

3270. Does your Farmers' Club discuss the question of rents, and whether there should be any tribunal to decide what rents should be?—Not at all. I must tell you for your information that we are rather opposed to any interference between landlord and tenant on the question of the appointment of an arbitrator; we are very much opposed to that.

3271. Is the whole club opposed to that?—The whole club is opposed to that; in fact, the whole district. There are one or two exceptions, but the majority is opposed to that.

3272. Has the question been discussed by them?—Yes, we were discussing it a short time ago.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

3273. Have you had any discussion upon the Agricultural Holdings Act?—We are not favourable to it generally. In fact in almost every instance the owners contract themselves and the occupiers contract themselves out as much as possible.

3274. Do you mean that they get rather better terms from their landlords than those conceded by the Agricultural Holdings Act?—We have the feeling in our district that we do not wish to disturb the relations between landlord and tenant more than we can help. There is a perfect unanimity and good feeling in our district generally; and we do not wish to disturb it.

3275. Do you desire to see any alteration in the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Not that I am aware of. There has been nothing suggested to that effect.

Rates.

3276. You have come here to speak on the question of rating?—Yes, that is what we feel most. We think something ought to be done in the way of rating. I can give my individual case to show how unfairly it operates. On my farm I am assessed at 349*l.* 10*s.*, and the rate last year was 4*s.* 2*d.* in the 1*l.*

3277. Have the rates increased of late years or not?—Yes, they have increased considerably. We have to pay the school rate now, and we have several little things to pay, and our rates have increased, I should think, about 8*d.* or 10*d.* in the 1*l.* within the last 10 years or so.

3278. Is that in spite of all the subventions?—Yes, in spite of all the subventions. The public will have such good roads, and we have to pay for it, and expenses generally have increased.

Highway and Poor Rate.

3279. How do you account for the great increase in the rates?—There is a tendency generally to increase

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the rates. The expenses on our roads have increased very considerably.

3280. Has the Poor Rate increased?—Yes.

3281. Do you know what the increase in the Poor Rate has been?—I cannot say.

School rates.

3282. Is there a School Board in your parish?—No.

3283. You have not a school rate then?—We have a school rate—it is a voluntary rate.

3284. Is it not a legal rate?—No.

3285. What are your suggestions with regard to the rating?—Just allow me to explain the inequality and unfairness; as I say, it applies to my own individual case. I am assessed at 349*l.* 10*s.* 0*d.* Mine is not a good farm really. I do not make a very large return upon it as a rule. I went down to the village near to where I reside, and made inquiries of our Overseer with reference to these rates. He told me the amounts that three or four persons doing a large and lucrative business and doing exceedingly well were rated at. There is one case of a builder living on his own property. Well, I have some property adjoining, and he asked me only a short time ago, "If you ever want to sell" (he thought that I should want to sell, being a tenant farmer), "if you want to sell that property, I wish you "would give me the offer of it." That individual is doing a very large business, employing a great number of hands, and altogether doing a very lucrative business. I find that he is rated at 16*l.* a year, and he sends four children to this school. There is a school rate of 4*d.* in the 1*l.*, and he is rated at 16*l.*, and that is all he pays upon, and I pay on 349*l.* 10*s.* I pay 6*l.* to this school rate, or nearly within a fraction of that, and he pays 5*s.* 4*d.*, and he sends four children to the school.

3286. I thought you said that the school rate was a voluntary one?—Yes.

3287. Therefore you are not bound to pay that?—But we pay that to prevent a greater evil in the way of a School Board.

3288. (*Mr. Long.*) It is practically a compulsory rate?—I imagine that if I did not pay it my landlord would be sure to charge it to me with the rent. I am not liable. That rate is on the property.

3289. If you had to pay for the School Board it would be a higher rate?—Yes.

3290. Is there any other means by which you can avoid a School Board?—No. To give another case that is very similar: There is a person who sends four of his children to this school; a man of good position, a very diligent man in his business, and saving money and buying property; he sends four children, and he is rated at 18*l.*

3291. (*Chairman.*) I suppose the same argument would apply to all the rates; not merely the school rates, but all rates. What I understand your case to be is that there are men of business making considerable incomes in the district who are assessed only upon the value of their houses, and who do not pay upon their trade income?—Yes, and actually making use of those schools which I pay for. I have educated my children and the State did not assist me, and now I have to educate the children of those persons who are in as good a position as I am myself.

3292. You think it rather harder on account of the argument used about the children?—I only mention the school rate in connexion with those persons sending their children to school. But you mean with reference to the rates generally. Well, there is that inequality. The collector comes to me, and I have to pay this enormous rate for the benefit of those persons who have good lucrative businesses who are paying little or nothing at all.

Taxation of income for local purposes.

3293. What is your proposal with reference to the rates?—I have a scheme of my own, and I should stand alone in that. My individual idea is that every man should pay according to his ability; that there should be no local rates at all; that roads, poor, and lunacy, everything of that kind, should be Imperial. That is my view, and then these men that I have spoken of would have to pay according to their income.

3294. You mean to have no local management?—There should be local management most certainly.

3295. But does not management involve the levying of the rates?—There is another instance in the parish of Lamberhurst, that is a person doing a very large business—a grocer and draper. He is a very rich man. I am not in a position to know exactly, but I have no doubt he has 50,000*l.* or 60,000*l.* in the Funds, and he is rated at 34*l.* a year. That is all that he pays upon for lunacy and everything of that kind.

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3296. I quite understand your complaint, namely, that there are people living within your district who have property elsewhere, or who are making considerable incomes elsewhere, but who do not contribute in the same proportion that the farmers do?—Yes, it comes very heavy upon us.

3297. What is your proposal to remedy that? I understand you to say that you think that the management of the roads, and lunacy, and poor should be local, and I will ask you whether you think the collection of rates for the purpose of bearing this cost should also be local?—It should come out of the Imperial Exchequer. I do not know how the money should be collected. It is very simple to collect income tax for various purposes, and I do not see why the money should not be collected in the same way for other purposes.

3298. Your proposal is that the management should be local, but that the cost should be borne by the State?—I think so. I am a member of the Highway Board at Tunbridge, and the payment for the Imperial Exchequer would be as easy as the levying of a rate in my opinion.

3299. (*Mr. Long.*) Your contention is that this gentleman, who has a large sum in the Funds, and was rated at 34*l.*, is not assessed upon his real income, but merely upon his rating, for local expenditure?—It is only upon his house that he lives in.

3300. There is all the difference between the case where local expenditure is met by Imperial funds while controlled by local authorities, and the case that I understood you to put, which is that local taxation should not fall upon land and houses, but upon income?—My view is that our property should not be rated at all.

3301. You think that income should be rated?—That is what I think; I, as an occupier, make a return of income tax—if I make any income—unfortunately I made a return with no income for some time, and I say on the same principle let me pay everything upon my income.

3302. (*Chairman.*) Let us follow out that proposal. You think that the rates should be levied upon the income tax?—I think so.

3303. Then the landlord who gets 346*l.* a year would have to pay on that?—I cannot quite say that. I know the difficulty in rating, but I mean that every person should pay on his income. There should be no rates. I do not agree with the rating in that way, but I should have it a tax. I do not call it a rate.

3304. Call it a tax. All that I want to ascertain is exactly what your proposition is. So far as I understand it, it is this: that everything should be taxed according to a man's income?—That is so.

3305. If that were carried out I presume that your landlord would pay in respect of the 346*l.* a year which he receives from you?—Yes.

3306. (*Mr. Long.*) Not on the 346*l.*, but on what represents income after deducting, if your system were to be adopted, the portion of the money which goes back into the property?—It is as simple as possible. I paid my landlord on Tuesday last. There was the gross so much; and on the deductions from income tax which I had paid, and repairs, and everything of the kind were so much, and I had to pay him minus that, which is about 600*l.*

3307. (*Chairman.*) As I understand you your landlord would then have to pay in proportion to the net receipts which he gets from you, which would represent his income?—He would have to pay on 600*l.*

3308. Then you would have to pay on your profits?—I certainly should.

3309. Then for the whole farm, including both yourself and landlord, that would be rather more than you are paying now?—It would be a larger amount. I admit that, but I want to get on even terms with the man who has 60,000*l.* in the Funds.

3310. Your view is that everybody within the district should be taxed in proportion to his income?—Yes, I know that it is rather an extraordinary idea, but it is the correct one. It is very unfair that tenant farmers should bear this proportion. It is said by many that it is only a rent question. I say that it is a tax upon the land, and I want to be relieved of this burden upon the land.

3311. Have you anything else you desire to bring before the Commission?—Only with respect to the effect of foreign competition, which causes the very low prices of our produce.

3312. That you have already dealt with?—That is what I have touched upon to a certain extent.

Hop farming.

3313. What proportion of hops do you grow yourself—or how much land?—I have rather more than 50 acres of hops.

3314. Do most of the farmers in your district grow hops?—Almost all the farmers do.

3315. And fruit too?—A little fruit.

3316. Do you grow fruit?—Very little.

3317. But I rather gathered from you that the hops having done well during the last three or four years it has made a great difference, and you have been able to make a profit out of the farm?—Hops during the last three years have done much better; previous to that, in consequence as I say of being swamped by the foreigner, we were almost ruined. For the last three years, from the short crops, we have had better prices, and hop growing has been remunerative.

3318. And you have been able to make a profit out of the farm on account of the hops?—Yes.

3319. Is that generally the case in your neighbourhood?—I think so.

3320. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) You spoke about the profits on hops as having been considerable; does that apply to all districts about the country?—No, I think not.

3321. You have been favoured in your district?—Unfortunately a portion of East Kent was not so much favoured. We are in the Weald of Kent, and perhaps this year we have the advantage of East Kent, as in that favoured district of East Kent they have not realised the prices they have been accustomed to.

3322. You spoke of the rents on Lord Camden's estate as being 12*s.* an acre; would that include hop land?—That would include the whole. I mention that without any data to go upon; but from what I gather from the occupiers, that is somewhere about the rent.

3323. Including hops?—I do not think they would exist without hops.

3324. Would there be a large proportion of hop land on such holdings?—Not a large proportion. As a rule all that part of the estate is not a rich estate at all, but there is a little land peculiarly adapted for growing hops along the alluvial soil where the rivers run, and I should think generally on the Bayham estate there is about 10 per cent. of the land in hops.

3325. The Tunbridge Wells farmers have no grievance with regard to the system of selling hops?—Nothing has been mentioned in that way.

3326. You are satisfied?—Yes.

Taxation of income for local purposes.

3327. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Those discussions in your club respecting the taxation of income have not been confined merely to the rating of land and agricultural produce, have they; has there been much reference to experiments of the same kind in other countries or in this country in former times? Has what you now propose been fully considered with reference to former experience?—Yes.

3328. You are quite aware that the experiment has been tried in the way that you propose, and been found not to answer?—I do not quite follow you.

3329. Taxing the incomes received by the residents of particular localities for the local purposes of the locality has been found quite impracticable, that it cannot be done; is that your experience? I want to know whether the club has discussed the experience of foreign countries upon that subject?—There has been no discussion whatever. I was not aware that it had been tried in other countries.

3330. I think I may ask you whether you are not aware that there is quite a literature upon the subject, and that a great deal has been written upon it at different times, and that the conclusion is that you cannot tax the whole income of the residents of a locality for the purposes of the local expenditure of the locality? Have you tried it?—No, but my contention is not to have any local taxation whatever, and that it ought to be done by taxing incomes.

3331. I thought from your answer to Mr. Long that you rather withdrew that?—I want to do away with everything local, but you may have an arrangement by local means to meet everything by Imperial taxation.

3332. That is to say that you fall back upon the idea that what you require for local purposes should come out of a common purse?—What is required for local purposes should come out of a common purse.

3333. In discussing that point has there been any reference to the idea that probably the local expenditure would be extremely wasteful and extravagant? There would be no local check, and the business would become intolerable in that way?—I do not think so at all; I try to take quite a different view.

3334. That the local authorities and local people would have the expenditure of the money, and that the central exchequer should provide the funds; is that the kind of thing that would answer?—It would be arranged similarly to the way in which the Poor Law is administered.

3335. But the Poor Law is administered locally?—It would be done by local means.

3336. But the point is that the local officers not spending their own money or the money of the people whom they represent, but spending money which they receive from a common purse, would have very different ideas upon what they might and would spend from what they have now?—But possibly we should be able to arrange it with the parish councils.

3337. The parish councils would also according to your idea be drawing money from the Imperial exchequer?—They would.

3338. But do not you see that the interest of everybody in the locality would be to spend the money?—Yes; my opinion is, and has been for some time, that arrange as you please the poor in whom we are all interested, and the good roads in which we are all interested, should be put upon the Imperial funds. That is my contention—you can arrange about the machinery of it, that is an after consideration.

3339. But from the nature of the case the expenditure must necessarily be local, and done by local agents, in which case it would lead to extravagance, or if not, if you meet the expenditure by means of Imperial agents, then you have a wide extension of the functions of State government, which is not desirable. These are not matters frequently discussed, and I should like to know if the attention of the club has been given to those points, and discussed?—Yes; it has been fully discussed.

3340. (*Mr. Little.*) Would you apply the system that you propose of charging all the expenditure upon the Imperial Exchequer to the expenditure of urban authorities, as well as rural?—I should generally.

3341. You are aware that the rates in urban districts are very much higher than in the rural districts?—I am quite aware of that.

3342. Have you calculated what share the rural districts would get in proportion to the urban districts?—No, I have not calculated that; but I think in the case of urban districts they might be excluded and left to their own management entirely. My scheme applies more to rural districts than to urban.

3343. Is there any probability or possibility of applying a system of relief to the rural districts that is not given to the urban?—I do not know how that would apply.

3344. You are not prepared to say if all the rates were thrown together and paid out of the Imperial Exchequer, that the rural districts would benefit by that?—I am inclined to think that the rural districts would benefit very much by it.

3345. What districts?—The rural districts.

3346. But if it were shown to you that that is quite a mistake, and that if all the rates were paid for out of the Imperial funds, the urban districts would benefit much more than the rural districts, should you still be in favour of it?—I do not think the urban districts would benefit.

3347. But assuming that they would, is it a mere question of principle or a question of gain to the rural districts?—My suggestion is simply the relief to agriculture.

3348. But supposing agriculture is taxed more in another form, there would be no relief?—No, certainly not.

3349. You are in favour of some revision of local taxation which would relieve agriculture, but you have not thoroughly considered the means by which that might be carried out?—Simply in the way I say, for everybody to pay according to his ability on his income.

3350. When you talk of income you are aware that income tax is not levied upon people who can show that they have less than 150*l.* a year?—Yes.

Reduction of rents.

3351. (*Mr. Lambert.*) I believe you said that you had 25 per cent. reduction of rent?—Yes.

3352. Is 25 per cent. reduction general in your neighbourhood?—This applies to marsh lands. I tell you that I have two occupations, one where I reside and the other on the marsh land.

3353. I mean generally on the kind of land on which you had that reduction?—I think there is pretty well that reduction generally. I do not mean to say that there is a reduction, but it is simply an allowance for this year; there has been a considerable reduction previously, but this year in consequence of the very bad season there has been an allowance, in my instance, of 25 per cent.

3354. This was an abatement?—It was an abatement.

3355. It is not permanent?—It is not permanent.

3356. Have you any particular grievances in your district?—We have no grievance particularly, no further than that we are smarting rather under foreign competition.

Import duties.

3357. You said something just now about putting a duty on imports; do you recognise that as practicable?—I think it is altogether so, and my scheme for that (I have had one for some time) is this—I think it is practicable to charge everything that comes into this country if it is only a small duty, a decimal duty. I think they ought to do it.

3358. You have not lost hope that some kind of protection will be imposed?—I hope it will be. I have not lost hope.

3359. You said, I think, that no compensation paid to the tenant would lessen the cost of production; what do you mean by that?—That there is nothing to lessen the cost of production.

3360. What do you mean by compensation?—On the one side, if you will allow me, you may put corn, meat, fruit, and wool, which are at a very low price, and on the other side we have to pay a higher rate, while we have to pay very nearly, if not quite, the same rent that we used to. There is nothing done to meet us; we have to pay rather a higher rate than we used to. That is what I complain about so particularly. I say in these times when our income is so very limited, when the tax collector asks me for more rate than he used to, I feel it very hard.

Increased cost of production.

3361. What I mean is this: Who do you think could pay you compensation because the cost of production had not decreased in the same proportion as the value of agricultural produce?—My view of that is simply what I said before, the cost of production is not lessened, we pay the same rate, and moreover we pay rather more money for labour than we used to. Everything tends against the interest of the farmer.

3362. You do not think that any compensation can be paid to you from any outside authority?—The only compensation that we can get is in some shape or way an import duty, if you consider that as compensation.

Reduction rents.

3363. You said you had to pay the same rent; I understood you to say that the reductions of rent had been pretty general in your neighbourhood?—There has been a little reduction.

3364. A little?—But in this individual instance of 25 per cent., that has nothing to do with where I reside. That is a reduction on my farm on Romney Marsh.

3365. But I want you to take a general survey of your neighbourhood?—The rents have been triflingly reduced, but very little. Generally the rents, excepting on Lord Camden's estate and the Marquis of Abergavenny's estate, are rather too high, and they ought to be reduced.

3366. Then why are they not reduced?—Because we have had three fairly good years of hops; but failing that, I do not know what we should do.

3367. You think that the rents are too high at present?—They are too high at present. In my individual case, I told my landlord that. I do not want any one to step in. We shall be able to make that all right.

Legislative interference between landlord and tenant.

3368. Why do you object to any outside interference to reduce the rent which is too high?—I am very much of opinion that if we were to have some one in that way it would disturb that good relation between landlord and tenant which exists at the present time, and I would rather give up farming if those relations were to be disturbed.

3369. Can a good feeling exist between landlord and tenant when the tenant is paying too much rent to his landlord?—I have been very fairly satisfied with the rent; but with the expenses now on the land, as well as the rates being higher, I can hardly be fairly asked by my landlord to pay them. I pay them, and I am so far satisfied in that way, but I feel that I am really paying too much for rates. I can hardly complain of my landlord, because my rent, though high, is not too high at present.

3370. But if you are paying more than a reasonable amount of rent, is it the fact that there can be a good feeling existing between landlord and tenant?—Well, generally not so, but I think in my individual case, my landlord has always met me in a very fair way, and this year he has given me on my grass land 25 per cent., so I do not complain.

3371. My point is this: if a tenant is paying more than he ought to pay for his farm, do you think that that would induce a good feeling between the landlord and the tenant?—No, I do not say that; certainly not. Quite the opposite.

3372. Do you not think that some authority outside to fix the rent at a fair level would bring about a more smooth working of things between landlord and tenant?—No, I do not think so at all; not the slightest. If they could do it smoothly it would be quite the opposite, but they would not; that is my impression.

Rates.

3373. You said that there was a considerable increase of rates in your district—of 8*d.* or 10*d.* in the pound?—Yes.

3374. You knew of those rates, did you not, before you took the farm?—Yes.

3375. Did you not take them into account when you took that farm?—I may say I never took the farm; my poor father took it before me and I have drifted into it.

3376. But supposing that the whole of the rates were taken off your farm, would you not have to pay that increase in rent?—I should think very likely I should.

3377. Then how would a reduction of rates benefit the tenant?—As I say, it is an open question whether it would. "This school rate," I said to my landlord's agent, "is 6*l.* now; I have to pay it, but I never agreed "to pay it." He said he would speak to my landlord about it; but I said "I only mention it for your con-"sideration. I think you ought to pay it."

3378. You would advocate a division of rates between landlord and tenant?—I think that would be preferable to the tenant paying the extra amount of rate at the present time; it is more than farms can bear generally in our district; there is no doubt about that.

3379. You are aware, I suppose, that a very large amount has been given to local authorities in local subventions?—Yes.

3780. And yet your rates have increased?—Yes.

3781. To what do you attribute that?—Only in one way; our machinery gets much more expensive. The clerk to the board of guardians is every now and then coming up and saying that he has so much work to do for the Rural Sanitary Authority that he asks for 25*l.* a year more, and so it goes on from 200*l.* to something like 250*l.* a year; and all our machinery tends that way.

3382. Do you not think that if there were the incentive of direct local taxation that would tend to more economical expenditure than by having these subventions in which the local authorities have not so much interest in the economical administration?—I am not aware that it would decrease them, but I am very much inclined to think it would not increase them.

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Now with regard to the Highway Board I notice the same thing. I am very much opposed to it, and I have been rather an economist on those different boards. Even the surveyor came and wanted an increase of salary; it was granted him directly; everything tends that way.

3383. (*Chairman.*) We may take it that you have been a member of the Highway Board and you find that the expenses are mounting up?—Wonderfully.

Low prices and import duties.

3384. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I think your evidence comes to this, that the real cause of depression in your district is that fall in prices of produce and that the only real remedy is a rise in the price of produce?—That is the long and the short of it.

3385. You advocate I think a duty upon hops?—Yes, we are of opinion that there should be a duty upon hops.

3386. Do you approve of a proposal that has been submitted by some of the witnesses to this Commission that part of the present duty should be taken off beer and that an equivalent amount should be raised by a duty on foreign barley and foreign hops?—I quite think so.

3387. Have you suffered in your district at all from the prevalence of cattle diseases, either lately or at any time in the past?—Not to any extent. We have had a few cases of swine fever, but only a very few cases.

Cattle disease.

3388. Have you ever suffered from pleuro-pneumonia or foot-and-mouth disease?—I have, but not very recently.

3389. Any recurrence of the disease owing to relaxation of the restrictions I suppose would be most injurious?—Very much so indeed. Fortunately, we have been free from what has been done for several years past. We have been nearly free from pleuro-pneumonia and foot-and-mouth disease—we have nothing of the kind now.

3390. Would you dread the recurrence of it?—Yes.

3391. Do you agree with the proposal which has been submitted to this Commission that in order to prevent the importation of those diseases it should be made compulsory in all cases that foreign cattle should be slaughtered at the point of landing?—I should hail with delight that it should be so.

3392. You attach importance to that?—Very great importance.

The witness withdrew.

LORD VERNON took the Chair.

Mr. WILLIAM JAMES HARRIS called and examined.

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3393. (*Lord Vernon*) You are here really to give evidence on your own behalf, are you not?—I am appointed by the Devon Chamber of Agriculture but under special conditions. Those conditions are that I shall say exactly what I like without any reference to the opinions of the Chamber.

3394. Are you here as a deputy?—I am a deputy from the Devon Chamber of Agriculture.

3395. Is the Devon a large Chamber?—Yes.

3396. What number of members are there?—I do not know exactly, I think 300 or 400.

3397. But you have come specially here to give evidence?—I am appointed on the vote of that Chamber.

Small holdings.

3398. But you have come to give evidence more particularly in favour of small holdings?—Somewhat in favour of small holdings, but especially to show that small holdings cannot succeed under present circumstances unless this depression in agriculture is removed in some way.

3399. Have you got an estate of your own?—Yes.

3400. What acreage is it?—I have over 2,000 acres now.

3401. When did you buy?—In 1871 most of it.

3402. Was that the inflated time? Had prices risen then?—I bought it very moderately.

3403. Did you cut it up partly in small holdings?—I did. Two of the principal farms fell in; I knew nothing about farming myself at that time; it was simply the desire for rural occupation that made me buy the estate, and I adopted the small holdings system.

3404. How much did you cut up in that way?—Very little at first, but I have been increasing it ever since until now—perhaps between 400 and 500 acres.

Size of holdings.

3405. What sized holdings have you?—They vary from 3 acres to over 40 acres.

3406. What size of holdings answers the best?—The man who holds only a small acreage can manage it and earn wages besides.

3407. What sort of land do you find answers in this sized holding?—They must have a little of arable land and a good deal more grass land, so as to keep cows, and just grow enough winter meat for the cows, and keep pigs as well.

3408. You have the land close to the cottage?—Yes; I was able to arrange that, and it is a very great point. It is no good having a holding far away from the cottage, because the tenant does not want to go a mile to fetch his cows home. His time is money, and he has to earn wages besides.

Population.

3409. Did the population of that district increase largely from your action?—The population, when I bought my estate, was 243, and at the last census it was 418. The agricultural population, therefore, of my estate has gone up by nearly 80 per cent.; and the agricultural population of the county in which I live has gone down about 30 per cent.

3410. But from 1871 to 1891 you did a considerable amount of building in connection with these small holdings?—A considerable amount.

3411. And I suppose the increase is not purely an agricultural population?—It is very nearly so. They are nearly all of them agricultural labourers who have got on; but a bootmaker would come, for instance, and a mason, and so on, and a miller, and some of the railway men took a little land. (*See* Appendix A. X.)

3412. At what period between 1871 and the present time has the increase been most rapid?—It has been gradual all the way through and just, about the same at one period as at another until lately.

Small holders and outside employment.

3413. It has so far answered very well?—It has answered up to recently and I hope it will continue to answer, but it is so very dependent upon the labour that we can give the men. They cannot live on these small holdings without they earn wages as well— only in exceptional cases can they. I have been more fortunately placed than most landowners could be, because I have got a railway station close to me, and certain little industries have risen up which have given some of the men extra occupation. They must have wages as well as their own farm work, and that is the point I wanted to bring before the Commission.

3414. Do you think that there will be a difficulty in continuing them in their small holdings?—Yes, I am very much afraid that some of them may have to leave very soon.

Decrease in arable land and rural population.

3415. Why?—Because my son who is the chief tenant on my property and the other tenants, are gradually giving up arable farming and are laying their land down to grass. The arable farming for the last two years has been unprofitable, and the grass farming still has its uses. We can work the grass land at a profit but not the arable land, and therefore if the arable land is to go out of cultivation and be laid down to grass on my estate, or on any other estate or in the whole of England, it will be just the same thing. If you look at the statistics of decrease of population and the decrease of arable acreage in Devonshire, you will find they have corresponded very nearly the one with the other, between the two periods of 1871 and 1891. I think you will find the arable acreage has decreased from 500,000 acres in 1871 to 360,000 acres in 1891, and the population has decreased in like manner, that is to say, the labouring classes in the agricultural districts.

3416. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) That is to say that the arable cultivation and the rural population decreases *pari passu*, that is your experience?—That is just so.

3417. (*Lord Vernon.*) The argument that would apply to your estate of small holdings would equally apply to the whole land of the country?—Yes.

3418. Therefore it is not specially due to the fact of your estate being cut up into small holdings?—I want to show that by the establishment of small holdings I increased the population very considerably, and that owing to the bad condition of arable farming at the present time I very much fear that the population will run down again, and that some of those men may have to leave.

3419. But do not you suppose that with a smaller population in any particular district the same difficulty would arise?—Under present circumstances I do, but I do not think it would have been so under the circumstances of the prices current a short time since, when in fact the men were all doing well.

3420. When you say "a short time since," how long ago do you mean?—Eight or 10 years ago; perhaps less than that even.

3421. What did they principally cultivate?—The larger farmers have been in the habit of growing a moderate quantity of wheat. It is not a good wheat-growing country, but oats and roots for cattle are largely grown.

Small holders and outside employment.

3422. But from what I understand you to say they are dependent upon other occupations?—I am speaking now of the larger farmers in the parish.

3423. But it would be impossible for those small holders of three and five acres to live on the produce of those three or five acres?—Quite so.

3424. And they must have extra outside employment?—They must have outside employment, and after that outside employment fails, I fear that the system may fall to the ground.

Tenure of small holdings.

3425. Would you give us some idea as to how your small holdings are held. Are they let, or are they on some understanding?—They are let on an understanding, I would willingly give a lease to any of them if they wished to have it, but none of them desire it. They do not want to pay the expense of the lease. I let them on this understanding that the rent was fixed according to the value of the land at the beginning; a value which a large farmer would give, and that it was not to be altered upon their improvements, and they have improved the land very much indeed. You have seen them, Mr. Lambert (*one of the Commissioners*), do not you think so? Yes.

Number and size of holdings.

3426. Will you please to tell me how many different holdings you have on those 500 acres?—I suppose 25 holdings.

3427. On how much acreage?—On 450 acres I think, it may be a little more, I have not counted them. The men are not all living in my houses. I have let little holdings to some with houses of their own which are close by; those houses do not belong to me, but in nearly all cases the houses do.

3428. Are most of the holdings of the same size?—They vary very much; one man has got 50 acres, and he began as a drainer at 12*s.* a week; until the other day he was doing well, but unfortunately the times are too much for him.

3429. What do you mean by "the other day"?—Well, I thought he was doing well until two or three months ago, but some misfortune seems altogether to have overtaken him. I believe the misfortune is not owing to his farming. He became security for one of his sons, and this son turned out badly, and the banks came down upon him, but he persevered after that. But I fancy things have been bad with him for the last two years, and he has probably been losing on his tillage and by the fall in the price of cattle.

3430. That is in no way connected with his agricultural experiments?—Yes, to some extent. Of course the guarantee for his son was in no way connected with agricultural experiments, but I think that agriculture has been very much less profitable to him than it was five or six years ago. He was doing thoroughly well, and he increased the acreage whenever I could let him a little more land until recently.

Tenure.

3431. Do you never have any difficulty with the tenants on the small holdings in consequence of their renting land from you simply upon an understanding?—I have never had the slightest difficulty.

Advantages.

3432. I see that you mention the exceptional advantages that foreign countries enjoy in the supply of produce. Would you tell me what exceptional advantages you maintain that they do enjoy?—Yes, they are really very many. I will endeavour to give them to you. I will first take the gold currency countries, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia. I may say that I have lately taken a journey round the world, and entirely devoted myself to agricultural investigations. I found that these were the principal advantages which the farmers of these countries enjoy over an English farmer. The English farmer is worse off, in the first place, than the foreign farmers, on account of certain advantages which the foreign farmers derive from the ease with which the soil is worked abroad. As a rule our English soil is not nearly so easily worked. For instance, I find in Australia, in New Zealand, in Manitoba, and in the United States as far as I went—I did not go very far into the United States—that they were ploughing with two and even three or four furrow ploughs, it just depended upon the consistency of the land. If it is light land they can get through it very easily. One man will drive these ploughs, and the rate for ploughing is 4*s.* 6*d.* per acre, which is very much less than land is ploughed for in England, that is the contract price for ploughing in Australia and New Zealand. The cost for harvesting in Australia and California is very much less than in England. They harvest with a stripper. It is a machine which runs along and cuts the ears of wheat off as it goes, and then they are returned back into a chamber attached to the machine, which goes round and threshes it out and it is discharged in bags, and it is ready for market. That costs 4*s.* 6*d.* per acre. Our cost of harvesting and so forth would be four or five times as much. Then the weeding of land is comparatively unnecessary abroad; the climate is very different. Then there is no call for a succession of crops abroad, and they do not use any manure. I consider that the necessity for rotation farming alone goes against the English farmer to the extent of at least 20*s.* per acre. They (the foreigners) grow wheat year after year on the same ground. In New South Wales, where I stayed with a farmer for a little time, I saw the whole operation. I saw a field there which had been tilled for wheat over 20 years in succession.

Production in foreign countries.

3433. (*Mr. Channing.*) Was it equally productive at the end?—I was going to give you some evidence on that very point. I brought some samples back from that very field, and I sent them to Dr. Voelcker.

3434. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) May I ask what countries you are referring to now?—I am referring specially to Australia and California. In those countries which use the stripper that is their way of harvesting. It is only in very dry countries that the stripper can be used. In New Zealand and British Columbia and Canada the stripper could not be used. I am now speaking of the harvesting.

3435. What do you say about New Zealand?—Well, I could equally mention New Zealand as an instance of occasionally growing wheat crops year after year, although not so much is done there in growing wheat; but in Manitoba, and the United States especially, it is the universal custom. Dr. Voelcker gives an exceedingly good account of the soils, samples of which I brought from New South Wales and Victoria. I can give the exact analyses of the soil of the field which was in wheat for twenty years; it is wonderfully good.

Production in England.

3436. (*Lord Vernon.*) I do not see how you can propose that this country may be improved so as to make it equally productive?—That is what I say, they have this advantage, we could not grow wheat here year after year; it is very doubtful if it would answer, even if our system of farming were entirely altered.

Disadvantages.

3437. How do you contend that your small holdings could answer if wheat can be grown so much cheaper elsewhere?—That is what I was coming to, I was arguing that their future success was doubtful, as in all probability the end would be that we should not be able to keep them up, if there was not sufficient inducement for arable culture to be kept up. Their success is so largely dependent upon the wages which arable farmers can pay. Well, then there is the rent and tithe, which I put down at least 15*s.* an acre against the English farmer. I presume that the foreign farmer pays some rent or interest of money, and that the average rent and tithe in England would be at least 17*s.* or 18*s.*, and that the cost to the foreign farmer for interest

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on cost would be perhaps 3*s*., and that would bring it down to 15*s*., and the rates and taxes 5*s*. against the English farmer on the average. There are hardly any taxes abroad. Everything is paid by the Central Government. In New South Wales there are no taxes at all, either Imperial or local.

Comparative cost of production.

3438. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) How much do you estimate rent, tithes, and taxes?—I consider the disadvantages that English farmers suffer compared with foreign farmers in exporting countries having a gold currency from all causes amount on the average to 102*s*. per acre, and that the advantages which they, the English farmers, gain in having neither freight nor insurance, I put at 15*s*. per acre, and the short yield of most foreign countries compared with England I put at 50*s*. in the English farmer's favour.

3439. (*Lord Vernon.*) 102*s*. an acre, you say?—Yes, that is what it costs more to cultivate an acre of wheat land in England than it would abroad. And then you have to take off the extra yield of the English land, which I put down at 50*s*. per acre. In average years the English wheat does not bring so much as the foreign.

3440. What does the 102*s*. per acre consist of?—I put it down in this way. The ease with which the soil is worked, preventing previous preparation and the saving in cost of ploughing and harvesting, 40*s*.; weeding, not necessary abroad, 2*s*.; no need for a succession of crops, and certain harvest weather I put at 20*s*. in favour of the foreigners. An English farmer has to use manures which a foreign farmer has not; or he has to grow certain intermediate crops which supply the fertilising for the wheat, which crops in all probability do not pay all their expenses, and rent as well. I put down that at 20*s*. in favour of the foreign farmers. Then rent and tithe 15*s*.; and taxes and rates 5*s*. That brings it to 102*s*. per acre. Against that, there are disadvantages which the foreigner has compared with the English farmer, I put the freight, carriage, and insurance at 15*s*. per acre, calculated on a yield of 14 or 15 bushels—that would be reckoned as about the average for roughly farmed land abroad; and the short yield I have put at 50*s*. an acre,—that is to say, the English farmer produces more to the acre. That gives 65*s*. against 102*s*. The American and Colonial farmers also save 3*s*. in the cost of seed, which I have not calculated.

3441. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) 40*s*. Is that the net gain to the foreigner?—Yes, I think that the price of most foreign wheat is rather higher than English, especially Australian, Californian, and American wheat—it sells rather higher, and that would be still another advantage.

Comparative yield per acre.

3442. (*Lord Vernon.*) But your calculation is based upon the yield in England and the yield in Australia?—I think it is about 14 bushels abroad versus 3½ quarters in England, and the English wheat being as a rule rather less valuable, sells at a lower price; there is something to be allowed for that as well.

3443. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What is the average crop that these figures are based upon?—3½ quarters to the acre.

3444. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Is not that 14 or 15 bushels rather too high?—I think you will find that recently the United States Statistical Department stated that the average yield, represented by the figure 100, was 14 or 14·5 bushels, I forget which. In Manitoba it is much more than that. In South Australia it is much less. In New South Wales there is an immense tract of land, hitherto only used as a sheep run, which they have just commenced clearing for wheat, and which is about the most fertile in the world. I refer to an immense acreage in the Murrumbidgee district, also between the Macquarie and the Castlereagh rivers, also on the Darling Downs in Queensland and in the Mallee districts of Victoria and South Australia, amounting in the aggregate to nearly 50,000,000 acres. When I was in Australia I stayed with a farmer who owned 40,000 acres in the district first mentioned (the Murrumbidgee district). He had never previously tilled more than 17 acres to corn, and this was the twenty-second year of its growing wheat without any rest, and a lot of land was being cleared and cultivated when I was there. The field I have mentioned has generally been cut for hay when the ears were not ripe, but one year, about six years ago, it was allowed to ripen, and produced 26 bushels per acre. I am giving you the figures of the farmer. But it is about the best wheat-land that I have ever seen. I imagine that there will be an enormous growth of wheat there if the price goes up, but the price is so exceedingly low that there is not much inducement to cultivate it. I calculate that the average yield would be 17 or 18 bushels there. I do not like to place too much reliance on statements made by interested parties, but I calculate that the cultivation would go on for many years, and that it would produce 17 or 18 bushels to the acre. I do not think that the English farmer could compete with that. I have only dealt with the gold currency countries at present. I consider that our colonies and ourselves, and even the United States, are beginning to suffer serious disadvantages in having to compete with silver and paper currency, but especially with paper currency countries. I consider that the Indian farmer is getting as much, and perhaps rather more, for his wheat than he did 20 to 25 years ago.

Foreign countries with silver and paper currency.

3445. (*Mr. Everett.*) That is a silver country?—Yes.

India.

3446. (*Lord Vernon.*) With reference to this they hardly exported any from India then at the time you speak of?—That was 20 years ago. When I gave evidence before the Duke of Richmond's Commission in 1882 they asked me that question then, and I happened to refer to my evidence the other day. The export from India had evidently been going on a long time then. I do not think that she has very materially increased her exports since, notwithstanding the advantage she has in respect of currency; but there is no doubt that wheat costs the Indian farmer no more, and he is receiving quite as much. India has not suffered from the depression in price.

Russia.

Argentina.

3447. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) The Indian farmer is receiving as much in rupees now at the present gold price in England as he was when the gold price was much higher?—Yes, as much as when wheat was 48*s*. or 50*s*. per quarter in England. The Russian farmer—that is a paper country—I can remember the rouble being 3*s*. 2*d*., and now it is 2*s*. 4½*d*., and has been as low as 2*s*. The Russian farmer considers the rouble exactly the same value now as he did 30 years ago. If you tried to pass silver roubles in the interior of Russia now, and also several years ago, the farmers would have looked at them with considerable suspicion, they would rather have a paper rouble because they are accustomed to it. In Argentina, of course, the difference is far greater. I do not pretend to assert that the farmer in Argentina does not know that there has been some depreciation in the currency, but at the same time the difference is so enormous that it gives him a tremendous bounty. The premium on gold is 228, that means that a dollar in Argentina is worth about 1*s*. 3*d*. in our money, its normal value was 4*s*., and it is only a very few years since the dollar was worth 3*s*. 8*d*. in Argentina, and the farmer is paying his men with very little advance in the currency of the country. He can buy land with very little advance in the currency of the country, and therefore his position in producing wheat has vastly improved. The important point is that the Argentina farmer, even if wheat were 20*s*. per quarter in England would be getting a considerable profit. In reports from the Foreign Office from Mr. Gastrell, our agent in Argentina, you will find an exact confirmation of what I say. I have been for years telling people what will be the result. I happen to be in a firm which largely imports corn from all parts of the world, and of course I am greatly interested in the import of corn; but I have seen these circumstances coming upon us for many years, and I have spoken freely on the subject, and forewarned people of what is going to happen, and it has proved to be exactly what I have said it would be.

Import duties.

3448. (*Lord Vernon.*) What remedy do you propose?—Nothing but protection of some kind, or import duties to level prices in favour of the English farmer, and I believe that in England our farmers will be ruined if it is not done. We could stand against the gold currency countries if all the burdens incident to British agriculture were removed, but against silver and paper currency countries there is nothing that will help except a counter-balancing charge.

Effect of the difference of exchange with India.

3449–50. (*Mr. Everett.*) Could you not give us in detail how much the Indian farmer, who receives his old prices to-day in silver, can sell his wheat at in our money owing to the difference in exchange?—We cannot grow wheat in competition with India to-day; the Indian farmers exchange has gone from 10 rupees for the sovereign to 17 rupees. If I took a sovereign to India 30 years ago, I could only get 10 rupees for it. With my sovereign to-day I can buy 17 equivalents of wheat now, whereas I could only buy 10 equivalents of wheat then.

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3451. Will rupees buy as much as they did before?—Yes.

3452. But owing to the difference in exchange you can sell it here for less?—Certainly for much less. The profit or commission that we grain merchants require is very small; it is an exceedingly close trade. It is the exchange that makes the whole difference in cost.

3453. But the difference which has arisen in exchange falls upon our price and not upon theirs?—Yes, I think it is an unfair advantage which is going to ruin the British farmer, and through the British farmer is going to do a great injury to the British nation.

3454. I thought perhaps you had the details showing this in figures?—I think my figures are given with reference to 17 versus 10 rupees.

Rates on small holdings.

3455. (*Lord Vernon.*) I want you to finish what we were on before, that is to say, with reference to the conditions under which you think small holdings for labourers can be successfully established?—If you can keep up arable farming in England, small holdings will succeed in most parts of the country, I have proved it, you must of course be moderate as to your rental. There is another point, and that is with regard to the letting of small holdings. The small holder generally improves his holding much more than a large one does. These improvements are often subjected to a higher rating. Directly he has improved his holding down come the authorities and try to rate him higher. It is a most iniquitous system, and it stops all improvement in land or at all events is a great bar, that rating should go up with the improvement in cultivation as it does. If a small holder lays down a good piece of arable land, and makes it good meadow land, that land, worth originally from 10*s.* to 15*s.* per acre, becomes worth 2*l.* an acre, and the little farm so improved is therefore subjected to a higher rating. In my parish the small holders being more numerous than the others we have been able to out-vote these people, and we have kept the rates down, but I see what it would be if the voting were the other way.

The witness withdrew. (For Mr. Harris's further evidence *see* Ques. 4759 *et seq.*, page 132.)

Adjourned to Thursday next at 12 o'clock.

Eighth Day.

Thursday, 7th December 1893.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
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Mr. WALTER F. INGRAM called and examined.

Mr. W. F. Ingram.

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3456. (*Chairman.*) You are a member of the East Sussex Farmers' Club?—Yes.

3457. And you have been requested by that association to come here to present their views?—Yes.

3458. What does the club consist of?—Of about 100 members, and though it is not a very big club, in our county of East Sussex there are very large farms, so that it really represents a very large area.

Size of farms.

3459. It is mainly a district of large farms?—Our county is so very different. All round Lewes and right away in fact from Hastings to Brighton of course there are the South Downs. Those are all very large farms, and then there is the Weald, below the Downs, where a great many of the farms are small ones. I should say that they are the rule.

3460. What sized farms are they on the average?—The largest farms run up to 500 acres. I could hardly say what the average is. They are all sizes, from 1 or 2 acres up to 500 acres.

3461. Is there a considerable number of quite small farms there?—I should say the small farms are increasing now considerably.

3462. What sizes do they run to generally? Is it about 20 acres or upwards?—We call a small farm anything from 5 acres up to 100 acres.

3463. I suppose a man would hardly occupy himself wholly upon a 5-acre farm?—No.

3464. You would hardly call those farms at all?—No.

3465. What is the smallest farm on which a man could live entirely?—I should think 20 acres is the smallest farm on which a man could live.

3466. Are those increasing in number?—Yes.

3467. Do you represent mainly the larger farms or the smaller farms?—Our club consists mainly of the larger farmers. I may say that I am also an agent of various properties, and of course am in that way representing a great many small farmers.

3468. Do you farm yourself?—No.

3469. You are an agent for estates?—Yes.

Acreage under management.

3470. How many properties do you manage, or what is the acreage of the whole of them?—Well, I should think about 25,000 acres now. I have had through my hands more.

3471. For several different owners, I suppose?—Yes.

3472. And all in East Sussex?—Yes, practically all in East Sussex. I have the management of some property also in Essex and Hertfordshire.

3473. But what you intend to speak of to-day will be mainly in East Sussex?—Yes. I may say that I have had the management in East Sussex of another 20,000 acres I should think.

3474. How long have you been engaged in this?—I have been in Sussex since 1877; that is 16 years.

3475. Will you describe briefly what has been the condition of things during that period—the changes that have taken place?—Do you mean as to the method of farming?

Condition of farms.

3476. No, the condition of the farms under your management?—With regard to prices, I propose to give you the prices of corn and sheep farms. I may say that with regard to dairy farms, of which we have a good number, they have chiefly sprung up in the last few years, and therefore I cannot compare the two periods of 20 years, which I propose to compare with regard to the other farms. Probably you will have evidence before you as to the dairy farms, and you will have a better comparison of prices than I could give you. I have some prices here of different farms. I have the receipts of a farm at a place called Stanmer near Brighton—a large sheep and corn farm of about 800 acres, and I find that in the year 1869-70 the corn realised 1,256*l.*, and in the year 1891-92 it realised 569*l.*

Fall in prices. Comparison between 1869-70 and 1891-92.

3477. Is it the same amount of acreage?—The same amount of acreage.

3478. Was the quantity the same in both cases?—The quantity was the same in both cases. The actual quantity of the corn land may not be exactly the same, but practically the farm has been farmed in exactly the same way. I mean there might be a variation of a few acres; that I cannot tell.

3479. It has not been laid down to grass in large quantities?—No.

3480. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Was the produce the same per acre in 1869-70 as in 1891-2?—I am not prepared to give you the acreage in wheat, barley, and oats.

3481. (*Chairman.*) You have taken an illustration of a farm where the conditions are pretty much the same in 1869-70 compared with 1891-2?—Yes.

Changes in tenancy.

3482. You are taking this farm where the conditions of cultivation are very much the same?—I am sorry to say that we have had very many changes during the last 20 years in the tenants, so that it is rather a hard thing to find farms even to make a comparison. You will not find the same tenants and the same conditions.

3483. You have selected this farm as a fair illustration, taking the two periods?—Yes.

3484. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What is the produce per acre?—As regards the produce this land ought to grow an average of something like four quarters of wheat.

3485. (*Chairman.*) You have not stated the exact acreage in corn?—I believe it is practically the same.

3486. But you do not know how much in either case?—No, I am afraid I have not got that. I could supply that later no doubt if I might do so. Then I have another large farm which I have taken for the purpose of illustration, and I have taken the receipts for the year 1891. I have taken the corn grown in the year 1891 and I have worked that out at the prices in 1873 and in 1893, a period of 20 years, and perhaps that would give what you would wish to know about the comparison in prices.

Fall in prices. Comparison between 1873 and 1893.

3487. What is it?—Shall I read the whole of the figures or only give the total?

3488. Please give a summary?—The wheat in 1873 would have realised 1,155*l.*, in 1893 it would have realised 623*l.* The oats would have realised 234*l.* in 1873, and in 1893, 153*l.* The sheep, the ewes would have realised 551*l.* in 1873 as against 286*l.* in 1893; and the lambs 741*l.* as against 444*l.* in those respective years.

3489. Are you taking in those cases the lowest prices of this year?—No; the average price at what I believe they would have sold at in each year. I might inform you that the average price in the year 1873 is obtained from a large farmer who has kept accurate accounts, and who has supplied me with the prices realised then. Wool would have realised 313*l.* in 1873 as against 173*l.* in 1893, and cattle I believe would have dropped 117*l.*

3490. From what?—It is rather a hard matter to get at the drop in cattle because although there has been a considerable drop in the fat price of cattle, there has also been a drop in the price of stores. I will tell you how I work it out. I consider there has been a drop in the price of fat cattle of 6*l.*, but on the other hand stores have dropped 3*l.* As 39 cattle were sold off that farm that would represent 117*l.* and therefore I say the drop is 117*l.*

3491. In comparing with 1873 you have taken the top prices, the year when the prices were at their highest?—I can give you all the prices if you care to have them. I have taken the average prices.

3492. I do not mean the highest price, but the year 1873, when the prices were high, before there was any fall?—Yes, I have gone back to the seventies because that was the period before the bad time set in.

3493. What has been the effect of that fall in prices upon rents?—Before I go to that I have some more particulars, but I daresay you would not care to be bothered with those. If you care to have those I can give them to you.

3494. Do you desire to lay them before the Commission?—They are really figures supplied by tenant farmers, and I know that they are accurate if you care to have them (*the witness handed in a statement*).

3495. (*Mr. Little.*) If they are actual results I should rather like to have them. What we have had at present is rather hypothetical. I suppose it is based on the assumption that about the same number of acres of corn are grown and the same number of sheep and beasts are kept?—Yes.

3496. It may be the case that two large farms are conducted on a regular system by the same man, but it is an assumption that the crops of 1873 and 1893 were the same?—Of course, that is an assumption.

3497. Taking the average, is that the market price of the day?—Yes.

3498. If that were taken on a very large scale, one might draw an inference from it, but taking it from a single farm it might be misleading?—Quite so.

3499. (*Chairman.*) That is the case of the Swanborough Farm is it not?—That is 1883 and 1893.

Comparison between 1882 and 1892.

3500. Will you read that case out?—I might say that the year 1883 and 1893 really means 1882 and 1892. Perhaps I ought to say that because the corn grown in 1893 has not been sold yet.

3501. You might read out the comparison between 1882 and 1892 in the case of Swanborough Farm?—This is a farm near Lewes, and is a corn and sheep farm in the same way. The acreage is about 800 acres. I may say that we do not confine ourselves very much to acreage, because a very considerable portion of this is down land, and 50 or 100 acres one way or other does not make much difference. The corn realised in 1883, 1956*l.*, and in 1893, 789*l.* The flock, which includes wool, 968*l.*, as against 532*l.* The cattle are really no guide, because the man changed his system from buying in cattle to breeding cattle. There is a wide difference in the figures, but they are really 1,660*l.*, as against 578*l.*

3502. That is not a reliable test?—It is not a reliable test. And on that farm there have been 60 acres laid down.

Outgoings.

3503. With regard to the outgoings, the expenditure, in that particular case, will you tell us what is interesting, as showing the reductions in rents and tithe and so forth?—The rent in that case has been lowered from 800*l.* to 400*l.* The tithe has fallen from 117*l.* to 85*l.* I am omitting the shillings in every case. The Poor and Highway Rate were 77*l.* and are now 43*l.* or 44*l.* There is a charge called the Water Scot, which is practically the same, only a few shillings different. The labour has fallen from 956*l.* to 844*l.*

3504. What is that reduction of labour due to; is it lower wages or less employment of men?—It is partly from the 60 acres laid down; that would make a certain amount of difference, and fewer hands I should say.

3505. Not a reduction of wages?—No, there might have been a very slight reduction of wages, but very little. Then there is that farm which gives a comparison of three decades put in on the left-hand side of my paper.

3506. That only gives the receipts?—Yes.

Fall in prices. Comparison between 1873, 1883, 1893.

3507. If you think it worth while to give those figures we shall take them?—These are the receipts of Falmer's Farm near Brighton, a similar farm, for the years 1873, 1883, and 1893. The receipts from corn in

1873 were 1,656*l.*; in 1883, 887*l.*, and in 1893, 572*l.* The flock for 1873, was 1,261*l.*; for 1883, 1,296*l.*; and for 1893, 630*l.* The total receipts, not the addition of those two items, but the total receipts on the farm were in 1873, 3,351*l.*; in 1883, 2,608*l.*; and in 1893, 1508*l.*

3508 The reduction in corn would seem to indicate that there has been a reduction in the cultivation, because the reduction is 66 per cent.?—That is quite possible, owing to certain pieces of ground which are called locally "Grattons," that is, small seeds being left to stand over for another year. The usual practice is to sow seed, either mow them or feed them with the sheep, and break them up in the autumn; but now owing to the bad prices realised by corn some farmers keep them over for another year, which means a decrease in the actual corn acreage.

3509. Up to 1893—do you mean the present year?—Practically it is 1892; it is the corn of 1892, but the sheep of 1893.

3510. Therefore the very bad harvest of the present year is not taken into account?—I have not taken this year into account in any case, because I think that this is quite an exceptional year, and has no real bearing on agriculture generally; at any rate, I hope so.

3511. Last year was a very bad year for the yield of corn?—Yes, very bad. It would be largely decreased this year, but I hope we may not see 1893 again.

3512. Is it as bad as 1879?—That was a very wet season. This is a worse year, that is with the exception that in 1879, owing to the wet, we lost a lot of sheep with the rot. Some of the flock farmers were more severely hit in 1879.

3513. Apart from that, the receipts probably were even worse than in 1879?—Certainly.

Reduction and abatements in rent.

3514. Now will you tell us the effect of the fall in prices upon rents?—Upon the large estate which I manage, the Stanmer Estate of Lord Chichester (I have taken out in each case the agricultural rents—there are certain other rents which I do not think have any bearing on agricultural rents), the agricultural rents have fallen from 9,285*l.* in 1877 to 5,319*l.* this year. That is a drop of 3,966*l.*, or rather more than 42½ per cent.

3515. Is that a permanent reduction, or partially due to abatements?—That is a permanent reduction.

3516. Besides that, have there been any temporary abatements?—I was going to give you three estates, and in the case of all three estates this year there have been abatements varying from 10 to 25 per cent.

3517. (*Mr. Everett.*) In addition to the reduction?—Yes.

3518. (*Chairman.*) Due to the extremely bad years you have spoken of?—Yes; what I am now giving you are three properties.

3519. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) The abatements are not on the Stanmer Estate?—Yes, from 10 to 25 per cent., according to circumstances, in addition. Lord Chichester did not tar them all with the same brush.

3520. (*Chairman.*) Is that on the half-year's rent, or the whole year's rent?—That is on the first half-year's rent of the year.

3521. That probably will have to be followed by very large abatements?—That is the half-year's rent due last Lady-day. We have a curious custom on most of the large properties in Sussex, which is, that the rents are paid on what are called half-year back; therefore the rent paid in October is the rent due on the previous Lady-day.

3522. There is always a half-year in arrear?—A half-year in arrear.

3523. And in the rents paid on Lady-day there is reduction of 10 to 25 per cent. on Lord Chichester's estate?—Yes.

3524. That will have to be repeated again the next half-year very likely?—I think that it is very probable. Lord Chichester has not made any promise yet.

3525. (*Mr. Everett.*) That is in addition to the 42 per cent.?—Yes, in addition to the 42 per cent.

3526. (*Chairman.*) You did not tell us what the acreage of Lord Chichester's estate was?—Between 16,000 and 17,000 acres.

3527. Now as to the other estate, Viscount Gage's Firle estate?—A great deal of that is down land. On Lord Gage's Firle estate there is rather over 12,000 acres. The rents have fallen from 12,284*l.* to 7,078*l.* That is almost exactly the same reduction as in the other case; about 42½ per cent. In addition, there has been 15 per cent. given all round this last half-year.

3528. There is not much down land?—Yes, it is very much the same sort of property.

3529. But the rental per acre seems very much higher than in the other case?—Yes, I think, taking it all round, it is better land. Then I have another estate, but I have not obtained the owner's authority for giving those figures.

3530. You need not mention his name then. What are the figures?—This is an adjoining estate. It is quite the same sort of thing; a property of between 6,000 and 7,000 acres. The rents have fallen from 7,445*l.* in 1871 to 4,479*l.* in 1893. I believe some abatements have been given on that estate, but I cannot say how much.

3531. Those three cases, I presume, are cases of large farms, are they not?—Large and small farms; they are very typical of East Sussex; of what I described at first, our land being on the downs and below the downs.

Reduction in rents on small farms.

3532. Have you any case of property entirely in the Weald with a larger proportion of small farms?—No, I have not; but on the smaller properties—the ownerships where there are smaller farms, the reductions given have not been as large as on the large properties.

3533. Is that because the owners were not willing to make them, or was it because the tenants did not require them?—The largest reductions have been given on those large sheep farms, and I think they have been more hit really than the smaller men. Then I think as a rule on large estates the tenants are rather better off; probably the owner is more capable of helping them.

Expenditure on improvements.

3534. Besides those reductions of rent has there been large expenditure in improvements?—On the Stanmer Estate in the year 1892 a sum of 2,678*l.* was expended in repairs and improvements.

3535. Was that more than the average of past years?—I was going to give 1893, which was 2,550*l.*, so that there is very little difference.

3536. Would that be about the average?—There is very little difference in the different years. The repairs have been always kept up.

Changes in tenancy.

3537. Have there been frequent changes of tenancies, in those estates?—Yes. I am sorry to say that there have been a good many, certainly in the last 20 years.

3538. Have there been more than the average?—No, I do not think there have been more than the average. I should say rather less than the average—I do not think there is very much difference.

3539. (*Mr. Everett.*) Do you mean the average of other estates, or is it the average of previous years?—I was referring to other estates; I thought that was the question I was asked.

3540. (*Chairman.*) When changes have taken place has it been impossible to find new tenants?—It has been very difficult in the case of these large farms.

Sub-division of large farms.

3541. Have you been compelled to break up the large farms at all?—We have done, and we are doing so in the Weald, but it is almost impossible to break up those large hill farms.

3542. And you find considerable difficulty in finding tenants for those large farms?—Yes, on account of the want of capital, I think; there are so very few men to take them.

3543. Have you succeeded in finding tenants for them or not; is there much land in hand?—Yes, there is a good deal of land in hand.

3544. The owners will cultivate them?—Yes.

Uncultivated land.

3545. Has any land gone out of cultivation?—It is not what is called "gone out of cultivation," but there is some very near it I am sorry to say; it is so very badly farmed.

Difficulty in letting.

3546. Then in the case of the farms in the Weald, you have not found the same difficulty in letting them, have you?—No, there is not nearly the same difficulty in letting a farm, anything up to about 100 acres, assuming there is not too much arable land to it.

Sub-division of farms.

3547. And have you broken up the farms there in order to let them in small holdings?—Yes, where it is

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possible to do so; but the great difficulty is that one of houses and buildings.

3548. But for that difficulty would a great deal more be done in that direction?—Yes, certainly.

3549. And the owners have not had capital enough to effect the changes?—No.

3550. Where they have had capital have they done so?—Yes.

Poultry farming.

3551. The small farms are let, not as arable farms, but as dairy farms I suppose?—Principally; and some of the very small farms are let as chicken farms in East Sussex; as you are no doubt aware, there is a good deal done in poultry rearing.

3552. That has increased very much of late?—Yes.

3553. A great number of small farms are devoted almost wholly to that industry?—Yes.

3554. Has it had the effect of breaking up large farms for smaller ones for the purpose of chicken farming?—Hardly that. Large farms have not been broken up for small chicken farms, but small farms have been broken up to smaller farms for chicken farms.

3555. What sized farms are those chicken farms?—They begin with a cottage, and a quarter of an acre or less of ground, and there are some big men, I suppose, holding from 15 to 20 acres.

3556. Not more than that?—I should not think more than that for purely chicken farms. Of course they may combine them with other things. It is rather hard to say exactly where a chicken farm begins and ends.

3557. Since when has that been an industry which has grown up?—During the last 20 years in East Sussex it has been increasing every year.

3558. I presume, therefore, it is profitable?—Yes.

3559. What do the rents of these chicken farms generally average? Could you put an average rent for them?—I should think that they paid something like 1*l*. an acre, but really I do not know so much about the actual part of East Sussex where the principal chicken rearing is carried on. It is principally carried on at Heathfield, and that is rather beyond my district.

3560. Is it extending into your district?—Yes, very largely.

3561. Some of those farms are devoted to the rearing of chickens and some to the fattening of them; have they divided the processes?—Yes, they are two businesses rather.

3562. One is rearing and the other is fattening?—One is rearing and the other is cramming.

Rates.

3563. Have the tenants, as a rule, obtained the advantage of the reduction of rates in proportion to their reduction of rents?—Yes, I think that they have. A short time ago we started an assessment committee in our Farmers' Club, and we sent round circulars to all the members saying that a certain number—about six or seven of our body—would form an assessment committee and would advise all our members as to their assessments, and we have not had a single case before us; so I presume that they take advantage of it.

3564. In other words, assessments have been reduced in proportion to their reduction of rent?—I think they are all quite alive to having the assessments reduced.

3565. And you think they have had the assessments reduced and obtained the advantage in the reduction of rates?—Yes, in nearly all cases. I do not know that all the small farmers have got it, because they are not so well up in it.

3566. If they have not done so, it is from ignorance of the opportunity they have?—Yes. I very often, as agent, ask them, and if they have not done so I help them, but I generally find that they have done so.

3567. But, looking at the rates as so much in the pound, have they been about the same?—I do not think that they have altered at all, but I think that they ought to be altered. They ought to have been lower, because the assessment is so very largely increased.

3568. Decreased you mean?—In the rateable value I mean—I mean the county rate basis, and the rateable value has increased through East Sussex, notwithstanding those reductions made on the separate farms.

3569. Then a larger proportion has fallen upon the house property; is that it?—Property has increased, but the county-rate basis has increased so enormously and also the rateable value for various purposes has increased also in the Unions that I think the rates ought to be decreased.

3570. But they are about stationary in the town?—Yes. Our county-rate basis has increased between 1874 and 1894 from 927,000*l*. to 1,641,000*l*.—an increase of over 75 per cent.

3571. Then, if during that period there has been a reduction of rent at all in proportion, namely from 43 to 44 per cent., and the tenants have obtained the reduction in the assessments, it shows that the value of other property has risen?—Certainly, and the increase of that property would, no doubt, make an increase in the various county rates for police, and various other purposes; I quite admit that, but with this increase, the rates have not decreased.

3572. And, therefore, the farmers ought to have a double advantage, namely, the reduction in the assessments, and the reduction in the rate per pound?—Yes, they ought to have the double advantage.

3573. But they have only had one advantage—the reduction of the assessments?—Yes.

3574. But, at all events, the result of your evidence is that the tenant farmers have, in the main, derived the full advantage of the reduction of rent in the reduction of their assessments?—Certainly.

3575. And the rates in the pound have not increased?—Therefore, they have had an advantage, certainly.

3576. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Has the poor rate gone down?—No, not in the amount in the pound.

3577. It has for the whole county very much, but not in your own district, has it?—Not as far as I am aware in East Sussex; not in the amount per pound. Might I say, before I go further, this: I give the case of a purely Agricultural Union, in which I know that the agricultural rateable values have been very much decreased, where it has increased from, in 1873, 19,000*l*. to 22,000*l*. The actual figures are an increase of nearly 20 per cent.

3578. And that, in spite of the fact that the rent has been reduced nearly a quarter?—Yes, and the assessment has been reduced. The agricultural assessments were all reduced some time ago 20 per cent.

3579. That also shows that other property has risen in value, and has increased the total assessment of the Union?—That is very nearly all due to a railway. I might say that I have some figures as to the rates and taxes on land in Sussex, if you care to have them, or anything of that sort.

3580. (*Chairman.*) What are they?—The average rates, taxes, and tithes per acre, on certain farms. do not know whether you care for them.

3581. Give us a summary, without going too much into detail?—One farm of 138 acres in the Weald averages 6*s*. 5*d*. per acre.

3582. When?—This year.

Tithes.

3583. (*Mr. Little.*) Can you distinguish the tithe?—The tithe is 18*l*. 4*s*. 5*d*.. I can give it to you.

3584. Per acre I mean?—I may say that I have not taken in in these calculations Income Tax, and I have taken the tithe at the value in the year 1893. For instance the apportioned tithe of that particular farm is 24*l*. 7*s*. 6*d*., but owing to the averages being low it is now 18*l*.

3585. (*Chairman.*) With regard to the tithe on these three estates that you speak of, have the landlords paid the tithe in consequence of the passing of the last Tithe Act?—Yes.

3586. And have they been able to recover the tithe from the tenants, or is that an additional outlay to the landlord?—In a great many cases the tenants have derived a considerable benefit from the tithe being paid by the landlord, but I have taken that into consideration.

3587. You mean in the reduction of the rent?—Yes, in the reduction of the rent.

3588. Now will you go on further?—I may say that with regard to these charges, they run up as high as 9*s*. 7*d*. per acre, taking in rates and taxes and tithes on some farms.

3589. (*Mr. Everett.*) That is with the tithe at its present reduction?—The tithe in 1893, that is at 70*l*. odd, I forget the exact figure.

Cost of labour.

3590. (*Chairman.*) Will you describe shortly the effect on labour?—I may say that the labour is very hard to arrive at owing to the altered conditions of so many of our farms. I have the labour on the first farm that I gave, namely, Stanmer, for the years 1870, 1876, 1884, and 1892. For the year 1870 it was 889*l.*; for 1876, 1,068*l.*; for 1884, 1,175*l.*; and for 1892, 1,195*l.* Then I have the labour on another large sheep and corn farm for the years 1863, 1873, 1883, and 1893. For 1863 it was 700*l.*; 1873, 770*l.*; 1883, 860*l.*; and 1893, 893*l.*

3591. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What was the acreage of that farm?—That farm was about 700 acres.

3592. (*Chairman.*) That will show that the labour bill has been gradually increasing upon the farm?—Yes. But, as I have said, it is so very hard in a great many cases to arrive at the labour because circumstances have changed so very much on a great many of those farms. There has been a great deal of land laid down, and a great many of the Sussex farms have been turned into dairy farms from corn farms. Might I say with regard to the labour that we all think that the labour is very inferior and getting a great deal more inferior to what it was in the past, owing to the best men going off to other employments.

Quality of labour.

3593. And that in spite of the fact that the wages have been maintained. I understood you that practically there has been no reduction in the wages?—No, there was a rise in wages some 10 years ago I suppose, and then that has fallen slightly since, so that I do not think that there is much difference.

3594. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Labour being inferior, you have to get more labourers?—It takes three men to do the work of two.

3595. That is the explanation of the rise in the labour bill?—Then I say that it is difficult to compare labour, because the use of machinery has come so much more in force.

3596. (*Chairman.*) What remedy has been suggested; is there any remedy suggested for that?—One remedy is that there should be more cottages. There is a difficulty on certain estates with certain farms as regards cottages.

3597. Is that through want of capital to spend upon them?—From want of capital.

3598. Have those dairy farms in the Weald paid?—I should say when they first began that they did pay; latterly they have not paid owing to the great fall in prices. Now there is a better prospect of their paying owing to the rise in prices, the rise being due in our case I think to combination.

3599. What kind of combination?—Amongst the farmers They have formed in our part of the county an association, and they have made arrangements with the dairy people in the towns to raise the price to the consumer, and therefore the middleman has been able to pay the farmer more for his milk and he (the farmer) has been able to make better contracts.

3600. With regard to the charges on agricultural land in Sussex, is that what you were speaking about in mentioning the rates and taxes?—Yes.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

3601. And then on the question of land tenure, has the Farmers' Club to which you belong expressed any opinion with regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act?—No, I do not think they have. I may say that we have, I think, a very fair system of tenant right.

3602. Is it more favourable than the Act?—I think I should explain it in this way, that before the Agricultural Holdings Act was passed the valuers in Sussex had a scale of tenant right. When the Act was passed they met to consider the Act, and they agreed that under the Act the tenants should be paid on a certain scale. A good many of those valuers being agents as well have adopted that scale and put that into their agreements, so that the farmers on those properties have practically got the benefit of the Act.

Counter-claims.

3603. Have others not got the benefit of the Act?—Well, they can claim of course under the Act, but then they will be liable to a counter-claim.

3604. Would the tenants who are under this agreement not be liable to counter-claims?—Yes, they would be liable.

3605. Then how is it that they are better off—I do not quite follow you?—Well, I do not actually think that the counter-claim would be likely to be made. I think that they are better off, though it is rather hard to find out why they are.

Valuation.

3606. One set of tenants claim without the agreements under the Act, and the others claim under the Act, and when they claim under the agreements it is not very likely that the counter-claim will be made?—I think that is it; that is the effect in practice rather, but I may say that personally I am very strongly of opinion that there should be a counter-claim. I would not do away with the counter-claim, because the great fault of our valuations is that the valuers do not allow sufficient for the bad state in which farms are left; that when there are claims made in that respect there is not sufficient notice taken of them, and the result is that it is a premium on bad farming.

3607. Do you think that the valuers should also take into account the good state of the farm in cases where the farms have been cultivated in a good manner?—Yes, I think they might, if it was general, properly recognise the state of the case when the farm is left in a bad state, but I think the good tenants are handicapped by what I call a premium on bad farming owing to the valuers not recognising that sufficiently.

3608. It would seem fair that the valuers who take into account the deterioration of the farm should also take into account the improvement in the farm?—I should not object to that at all if we had the other.

3609. Are they not entitled by law to take into account the general deterioration of the farm?—Yes, claims are very often made, but they are practically not recognised—not nearly sufficiently recognised.

Fixing of rents.

3610. Has there been any discussion in your club on the subject of fixing the rents?—I think they are all universally against it; I should say so.

3611. Has the question been discussed?—No.

3612. But so far as you know they are not in favour of it?—Quite so.

3613. What is your own opinion?—I should be decidedly against it.

3614. On what ground?—I think unless circumstances change very much indeed that the tenants are perfectly able to take care of themselves, and from a landlord's point of view that if a man was likely to be leaving in two years, or two or three years, and was looking forward to a fixed rent at the end of that time, he would let his farm run down very much; he would very likely do so with the idea of getting a lower rent fixed in consequence.

Reduction in rent on small farms.

3615. I think you said that the reductions had not been so large upon the smaller farms and upon the smaller properties as upon the larger ones?—No.

3616. And that that was partly due to the inability of the owner to give the reductions?—I did not quite mean that, but I think that the general impression is that on the larger estates they are treated rather more liberally.

3617. Has there been any demand on the part of members of the club for other alterations of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—No, I do not think so.

State loans.

3618. Do you consider that it would be desirable that the State should advance money for improvements?—Of course I am not at all aware—I am not sufficiently acquainted with State affairs to know whether they could do so, but I think it would be a very great advantage if they would make advances for the building of cottages and for the building of farm buildings for small holdings, at a low rate.

3619. I think you have stated that but for the difficulty that the owners have in advancing capital there would be further progress made with the breaking-up of large farms into small ones?—Yes, I think that a great advantage, and more would be done if the owners could be helped.

3620. Has that matter been discussed at all by the members of your club?—No, the difficulty as to cottages is very often mentioned, but the remedy has not been mentioned.

Protection.

3621. Is there any other point that you desire to bring before the Commission?—The remedies I am afraid are not very easy to suggest. Of course the remedy that our club suggests is Protection, particularly as regards foreign flour; what they say is that the trade of making this flour is out of the country, that we do not get the offal at home from the milling, and that they do not believe that a slight duty would raise the price of bread, considering that the lowering of the price of wheat has not affected the price of bread as much as it should do; that is the view of the club, it is not my own view, because I think Protection is perfectly hopeless, but I am bound to give it as the opinion of the club.

Cattle disease.

Railway rates.

Highway rate.

Adulteration.

Labelling of foreign meat.

3622. That is the view of the majority of the club?—Not all. Then we think that the same measures as have been enforced should be continued with regard to the prevention of cattle disease. The members of our club think that whatever Government has been in power of late years they have done all that they possibly can to help the farmer, but they think that if we had had cattle disease really badly as we have had it in former years on the top of our troubles we should have been in a worse state than we are now. Then we think also that we have suffered from the railway rates, and there ought to be an equalization of railway rates. How far that has been done we are not in a position to say, because we cannot compare the foreign, not exactly the foreign rates, but the rates for foreign produce, that is what I mean to imply. Then we think that the burdens on land in the way of rates, tithes, and taxes are unfair, and there is a very strong feeling as regards the highway rate, and that, as they put it, the people who use the roads do not pay for them. For instance, the timber merchants and people like them have benefited enormously from the turnpikes being taken off. We know cases of timber merchants who openly say that from the turnpikes being taken off they are 300*l.* a year better off. The principal remedy that I propose is the prevention of adulteration and fraud, particularly in dairy produce. The adulteration of butter and the adulteration of milk by separated milk, the adulteration of feeding stuffs and artificial manures. I am not speaking of the whole body of the club, because I have only discussed this with a certain number, and, perhaps, I had better put this personally. I think that if some system of cheap analysis could be given to the farmers it would be of very great benefit. At present there are very few analyses taken. It is true a certain number of farmers belong to the Royal Society and they send up. We have thought of trying, in fact we have tried, to get an analyst for our club, but we find that the expense prevents us. We think also that foreign meat should be labelled or sold as foreign meat in some way or another, and though, perhaps, foreign meat is a blessing to the community, it has certainly hit the farmers very hard indeed. I might give a sort of instance of that. Formerly, in our markets, if you went into our cattle markets you would see butchers from all our seaside towns; they were all more or less in competition with one another. Now every single one of those butchers, I think, has an ice chamber and gets his meat from London, and instead of having the number of butchers that we used to have 20 years ago we do not have more than three or four now. I daresay one cannot help it, but it is hard upon the farmers.

3623. When you speak of "our" markets you mean the local markets?—The local markets; all those used to be attended by the butchers from those large towns, and now we only get a few of them.

3624. What are the main markets for your district, the seaside towns, I do not mean local markets; does your produce go to the seaside towns or to London, or the local markets?—I should say our beef and mutton, our meat, went principally to those towns, and our dairy produce goes principally to those towns and a certain amount to London. Then a good deal of our produce is distributed throughout the country, for instance, on the sheep farms that I talked of we do not sell the sheep fat, we sell our sheep as stores, and they are distributed throughout Sussex, Surrey, and Kent, and down into various other counties. I think we all regard it that our great difficulty has been the difficulty of labour, and that is where the small holdings as a rule pay, because they are generally worked by a farmer and a son or two.

Small holdings for labourers.

3625. Do you consider the increase of small holdings to be important in its effect upon labour?—I think you get rid of the difficulty of labour very much—that is the main object in establishing them.

3626. It is an inducement, too, for the men to remain in the district of the country?—I do not think that an agricultural labourer is, as a rule, a man to put into a small holding. There are a certain number of them of course who take small holdings.

3627. Who should be put there then?—I think with regard to the small holdings that every village ought to have a certain number of them, and the people who would probably take them would be the small shopkeepers of various kinds, such as wheelwrights, blacksmiths, and those sort of people. There are very few cases within my knowledge of the labourers being capable of taking a small holding. Certain exceptional men do, and those should have them.

3628. Have you known cases in your district of labourers rising to be small farmers?—Yes.

3629. Are there many such cases?—Not a great many. You see the difficulty with the labourers on small holdings is that a small holding, as a rule, does not keep him; he has got to find labour elsewhere, and the farmers are not very keen on employing him. There is a very good reason for it, because, as a rule, I think that the small holder thinks of himself before he thinks of the farmer, and very naturally. If he has got hay to get up and the farmer has hay to get up, the man starts and gets his own hay up first.

Creameries.

3630. (*Lord Cobham.*) Of what size are the holdings you speak of?—Those would not be more than up to 20 acres. Although I do not know of them personally, I think that the establishment of creameries would be a good thing; not dairy factories, but creameries.

3631. By the joint action of the farmers?—Yes.

3632. I think you said that the dairy farmers combine for the purpose of raising the price of their milk?—Yes.

3633. That would show that they have it in their power to combine for the general good of their body; cannot they undertake many of those other functions that you spoke of?—Yes, they might undertake them; but I think that the creameries are better than dairy factories.

Allotments.

3634. Do you think that allotments will provide a sort of stepping-stone for agricultural labourers to small holdings?—They might do, but I think not as a rule. First of all, I think that every man who has a cottage ought to have sufficient garden, and he then does not want very much allotment ground; and my experience of allotments is that when the men get better off they give up the allotments. I know of a case when there was a good deal of stir under the allotments—I believe about the year 1842. The owner of the property laid out a lot of land in allotments, something like 45 acres, and that has now dropped to 9 acres, though the conditions are very much the same, with the same number of houses, and so on, and of those 9 acres a certain amount is held by the village innkeeper.

3635. You mean that as wages have risen the demand for allotments has fallen off?—I think that the labourer's position is better, take it all round, and as it has got better they have not cared to work so much in the allotments. The allotments have not been so much an object to them.

3636. Has that been the case in the last few years, when there has been so much stir about allotments?—No; I think outside towns there has been more done, and rightly so, about allotments. I think all through our country, particularly in the purely rural places, they already had allotments and they did not want them.

3637. And they are not applying for them now?—They have been outside the towns.

3638. Has the County Council done much with the technical instruction grants for the labourers?—Well, they have had a certain amount of lectures on gardening and various subjects.

Technical instruction.

3639. Do you think that a good result has been obtained?—No, I should not think that there has been very much. You see the difficulty is this: what our County Council said was that in everything that was done in reference to technical education, the people who derived the benefit must pay something towards it. I proposed a scheme to them for teaching labourers better-class work, and to do that I proposed at the end of their time that the pupils should be paid a sort of premium, but then the County Council said that they could not pay that.

3640. They will not allow any instruction without some payment?—No. For these lectures they did not charge much, only 1*d.* a head; for everything that is done there is a charge made.

3641. And that has been an obstacle you think?—I think in this case. I do not know that my scheme was a good one; perhaps it was a bad one—but what I said was that you cannot take young men—purely agricultural young fellows—away from home and place them with a man and teach them a business without paying them something, because they have to pay their lodgings. But the County Council said, "We cannot pay that." Then there have been dairy schools through our county.

3642. Have they been popular?—Yes, I think very popular on the whole. I think our people want a lot of teaching in making butter, but the difficulty is when it is made there is a great difficulty in disposing of it. You may make the best butter, but the British public—well I think they will eat anything—I do not think they are judges.

Small holdings. Loans for providing buildings.

3643. You are in favour of advances for the encouragement of small holdings to provide buildings for them?—Yes.

3644. Do you think that such advances would earn the interest charged upon them?—Yes, I think so; just in the same way as Land Improvement Companies do. I suppose that would be paid off in 30 years, and it would be the same kind of thing I suppose.

3645. I suppose you wish a lower rate of interest than the Lands Improvement Companies charge?—Certainly, or I do not suppose it would be taken up, or it would be taken up now under the Lands Improvement Companies.

3646. Money, in fact, you think should be advanced by Government at a much lower rate than the companies charge at present?—If it is to answer, I do not say that the Government can do it, because that is a matter I know nothing about. But it must be a lower rate than the Land Improvement Companies now give.

3647. Should the money be repayable within a certain term of years?—I think that would be better; not to go on *ad infinitum*.

Cottage rents.

3648. It would not be less than 3½ per cent. Do you think that money on cottages in East Sussex would be certain to earn that amount?—I do not know that it would with the present rates charged for cottages.

3649. What are the rates paid for cottages?—They run from 1*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* a week. 2*s.* 6*d.* is only charged as a rule when it is near a town or something of that sort. A good many of the tenants all through our estates do not pay more than 1*s.* 6*d.*, and on certain properties not more than 1*s.* per week.

Wood cutting.

3650. Referring to the labourers, have they not got certain rights of cutting wood which they value a good deal?—There are no rights.

3651. The right of cutting wood I mean?—Certain farms have a certain amount of underwood with the farms, what we call "shaws," little coppices. Those go with the farms, and the tenants cut them. The labourers on the farm are employed, and of course we have a great deal of underwood through Sussex and a great deal of spare labour is used in the woods.

3652. And in this way they have benefited the labourers?—Yes; in this way they can always find labour. A man who is worth anything at all will find labour in the winter in the wooded parts of the country.

3653. They do not derive benefit in the shape of actual woodcutting from the coppice?—No; for instance, if a man buys a piece of underwood the man he employs to cut it takes all the brushwood and brambles and deadwood, and the man who cuts down trees takes all the chips. In that sort of way the labourer is benefited, but there is no particular land laid out upon which wood is grown for the use of labourers.

3654. There are no common rights of such a character?—Not that I know of in my experience.

Labourers' cottages.

3655. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You said that in some parts of Sussex there was a dearth of cottages. Have you found on the large farms that the cottages are in out-of-the-way parts where the labourers are very reluctant to go?—Certainly; you could hardly wonder at that.

3656. You have to build cottages, and mostly near the villages?—Yes, or near roads, in order that they should get to the shops and get to the schools.

Small holdings.

3657. Given fair land, what is the size of a farm that a man his wife and four or five or six children could live upon without any other occupation? How many acres would you give him to live upon?—I should think that he ought to have nearly 50 acres, but in the case of those chicken farms they do undoubtedly make a living on small holdings.

Sale of live stock—(*a*) by auction

3658. Would you tell me how you generally sell your cattle and sheep, whether by auction, or at markets, or how?—Till the last 15 years we had no auctions I should say. We sold them either in the markets or at fairs. Lately auctions have sprung up, but personally I think they are a mistake. I think if you have auctions at all you ought to have them very general.

(*b*) by live-weight.

3659. Are your beasts sold by weight or merely as animals?—A very few are sold by weight, but practically selling by weight is not done.

3660. Do you advocate selling by weight?—Yes.

3661. Do you advocate it strongly?—Strongly. For instance in our town of Lewes we have got a cattle market there which is nearly defunct, and for years, in spite of the Act, there has been no weighing-machine there. I have not been there for some time, but up to quite lately there was not one there, and I do not think there is one there now.

Slaughter of foreign cattle.

3662. Would your Farmers' Club advocate the slaughter of all animals at the port of disembarkation?—I suppose from our own personal feeling we should, but we do not want to be selfish; we know that our Scotch brothers import a lot of foreign store stock, and if this is of advantage to them, and if sufficient restrictions are adopted, we do not want to interfere with this trade.

3663. You do not think that the South of England could rear sufficient stock to supply our Scotch brethren?—We do not know that. We know that this year there are a great many beasts that have gone into Scotland which would generally have stopped with us.

Rents.

3664. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Do you not consider that the rents of the estates you have mentioned to day are high?—Certainly not now, whatever they were.

3665. According to the style of land—it is simply down sheep farms?—Still I do not think that they are high.

3666. Is the rental of the surrounding estates in the same proportion as those that you have mentioned?—I should say so, with the exception that I think, as I said before, that the smaller farms in the Weald have not had the same reductions.

3667. Would the rental of the Stanmer estate, 9,285*l.*, be net, or plus tithe?—That would be plus tithe. I have taken the tithe into account in all my calculations.

3668. 5,319*l.* is the rent it pays now, and that would be minus tithe?—There might be some tithe still paid by the tenants, but that would not come in.

3669. Those figures would not be quite accurate as compared with the others then?—They are quite accurate as a comparison of the rents paid at that time, and the rents paid now. You are obliged to bring the tithe in paid by the landlord, and it was not previously.

Size of small holdings.

3670. You spoke of small holdings, they are not in the nature of allotment holdings. What is about the average size of these small holdings that you spoke of?—They would run from 5 acres up to 100 acres; that is the sort of farm I consider a small holding.

3671. Is there any other special cultivation than that of poultry farming upon them?—They take poultry or dairy principally. Of course near the towns there is a certain amount of market gardening done in them.

3672. Has that proved profitable?—It is not nearly so profitable as it was a few years ago; they have suffered, I should say, very much.

Market gardening.

3673. Have you not found that where there is any special cultivation tenants have done fairly well—comparatively at least?—Poultry, yes; dairy, no, and market gardening, no.

3674. Why not market gardening?—I think that it has increased so much. There is this great difficulty in market gardening, that we cannot get the early things. That of course we cannot help; it is the climate. You get all the best prices if you can get early vegetables to the markets.

3675. And you say it is not profitable, although there are large populations near at Eastbourne, and Brighton, and so on?—I think that it is profitable just close to the towns.

3676. Only close to the towns?—Yes, but then you see those are in a great measure not small holdings, but large extents of market gardening.

3677. With regard to market gardening, is the reason of their not being profitable because of the insufficiency of the means of distribution?—I think if there could be better means of distribution that the whole system of small holdings would be very much more profitable in the country. If, for instance, they could do the same sort of thing that the Normandy peasants do, that is to say, come into the towns and villages, and sell their produce in the market.

Poultry farming.

3678. And that would apply to poultry keeping in the same way, would it not?—No, I do not think so, because there is a regular system; there are people called higglers, who come round and pick up all the poultry, and send it off by rail. Poultry is sent up from our districts by the ton.

3679. No eggs are produced, I suppose?—I do not think that they produce a great many eggs, because they go in for chickens.

3680. Might not poultry farming, with regard to chickens and eggs, be very much extended with advantage?—Yes, I think it might be extended, and I think it is being extended almost every day in our county.

Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act.

3681. With regard to the Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act, do you think that will benefit the farmers?—Yes.

3682. Will they take advantage of it?—I think they will, where they are sufficiently educated to do so; but I think they might be helped, and I dare say that they will be helped with pamphlets, and so on, from the Board of Agriculture, giving them the information of what they ought to apply for. I mean in buying, say, cake, they ought to be told what to stipulate for. For instance, the Royal Agricultural Society have issued in their Journal, under the chemical part of it, a statement of what people ought to ask for.

Protection.

3683. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You told us that although the club were in favour of Protection, you are not of that opinion yourself?—Quite so.

3684. But then why not ask Protection for all kinds of agricultural produce, not merely confine it to flour?—I think it comes to this, that they say flour, but then if they thought that the other farmers throughout the United Kingdom would not be satisfied with that, and that they would want Protection on something else, they would join their brother farmers in getting it.

3685. Is it a strong feeling in the club?—A very strong feeling.

3686. Is it only a preponderant opinion or is it a strong feeling?—I should say it was a preponderant opinion. Personally, I do not see why it should raise the price of bread considering that the fall in the price of wheat has not lowered the price of bread.

Price of bread.

3687. Are you quite sure that the fall in wheat has not lowered the price of bread?—With us that is so.

3688. Have you gone into the subject carefully with all the necessary attention that you must give to a subject of that kind, which is extremely difficult, and are you quite sure that the price of bread has not been lowered by the fall in the price of wheat?—I daresay that it could be proved the other way.

3689. It is really a very difficult subject to follow out I mean?—Our millers used to take as a guiding rule that when wheat was so much a load (our load is five quarters of wheat), they charged us so much a gallon for their flour, but now that wheat is at a very much lower price per load, we have not had a corresponding drop in the gallon of flour that we know of.

3690. Of course, you are aware that as regards the price of bread, you have not merely to take into account the price of English wheat, but the price of all kinds of foreign wheat, and that there may not be the fall in foreign wheat that there is in English wheat, that the bread is the result of a mixture?—We can see the price in the papers, and we know within a little what price the foreign wheat is.

3691. But taking into account not merely the fall in English wheat, but wheat generally, do you think that it has no effect upon the price of bread?—It is my opinion that there has not been a corresponding fall in the price of bread.

Labelling of foreign meat.

3692. Are you yourself in favour of foreign meat being labelled and sold as foreign meat? You said your club was in favour of it; do you support that view?—Yes, if it can be done. It seems there are numerous difficulties, but if any system is devised—I do not propose any system—I think it would be a good thing.

3693. Would you not be satisfied with a measure by which sellers of foreign meat would be compelled to stick up above their shops that foreign meat is sold here?—I think that would be a very good thing. For instance, in the town where I live, Brighton, there is a large shop called The Farmers' Supply Association. I cannot say for certain, but it is believed that the whole of the meat sold by them is foreign, although they call themselves The Farmers' Supply Association, and they lead people to believe that they sell English meat, and we consider that to be a grievance.

3694. But do you, as a matter of fact, anticipate that you would get a much better price for your own meat if those restrictive laws were introduced?—No; we do not think generally that we would. But we think in common fairness it should be done.

3695. What advantage would that be to you, then?—We think there would be a certain amount of advantage; we should get some advantage in an increased price.

3696. But you are not prepared to say how much advantage; you have not gone into it very much?—I think that must be a matter of speculation; I do not think you could say.

3697. And you are not aware of the amount of evidence there has been that possibly the labelling of foreign meat, and the putting up of signs on shop doors that foreign meat is sold, might have the opposite effect of a good advertisement on foreign meat?—We are willing to try the experiment.

3698. But still, you have not considered it from that point of view?—No, but we are willing to try the experiment.

Reduction of rent and cost of labour.

3699. Are tenants able to make their living now at the reduced rents that you have spoken of generally. I do not mean in any particular years?—I do not think that the rent goes to the root of the matter. Our great difficulty is labour. Tenants come to me, and they say, "Well, sir, I want a reduction of rent. You "know it is not the rent that hits us, it is the labour. "We cannot get it off the labour, so we must come "to you for a reduction of rent."

3700. If you gave it from the rent, would not that be sufficient for the tenant farmer?—If you took off all the rent, I do not think it would be enough.

3701. That is to say, that the land in your neighbourhood is not able to pay rent at all under the present conditions; is that what we are to understand?—Of course I can answer you, but I do not know, it is rather difficult, if this is to be produced in print against me.

3702. You have stated that you are of opinion that the tenants could not live if they paid no rent at all on some of the farms?—Yes.

3703. The inference would be that they ought not to pay rent?—I do not think that it is to the interest of the country that they should not pay a rent. If you do not pay a rent, you get improvements and repairs stopped at once.

3704. No doubt; but why should a man go and undertake a burden which really he cannot afford to do. He would be much better engaged in doing something else?—But what is a farmer fit for; what can he do?

3705. (*Chairman.*) You said, except in the case of very large farms, it was still possible to let farms at the rents which are now being levied. That would tend to show that there is a demand for farms, would it not?—For small farms.

3706. But you said the difficulty was in the case of very large farms, and that that arose from the want of capital of the farmer?—That is the difficulty in letting. I say the great difficulty on those farms is the difficulty of labour; I think where you have small farms, so that a man and his sons can work them, that difficulty of labour is very much got over.

3707 In the case of small farms, the man himself labours, and he does employ another labourer, and he superintends it closely himself?—The man and his sons generally do the work.

Rent and expenditure in improvements.

3708. (*Mr. Giffen.*) In the case of other farms, we might take it as a general rule, that if rent is paid at all, there is a class of people on the whole who can afford to pay and do pay the rent because the business goes on?—Yes, there are a certain number of tenants who continue to pay, undoubtedly.

3709. Because that leads me to the other question which I was going to put, which is, whether the tenant farmer carrying on business would himself benefit very much by a great many of the remedies which you have been suggesting, such as the transfer of rates from local to Imperial charge, and things of that kind; is it quite certain that the tenant farmer would be the gainer?—I think he would. Of course, I am perfectly aware that you can say that if you take off charges you simply increase the rent, but I think that it is to the advantage of the farm and the estate, and of the country generally that rents should be paid I do not see how the repairs and improvements can be carried on unless rent is paid.

3710. But the question rather is how much rent then; is it sufficient rent to enable the landlord to spend money upon repairs and improvements, or is it something beyond that?—I do not think I am prepared to say in general terms. Every farm must pay the rent it can carry according to the capabilities of the farm.

3711. And looking at it from the point of view of a tenant farmer, as a matter of business you say that he goes to the landlord, and says, "I cannot pay so much "rent, because I have to pay so much more for labour." Surely it does not matter to the tenant farmer whether he pays it to the labourer or to the landlord?—It is better for him to pay it to the landlord, and then he would probably get some of the benefit. On any well-managed estate the tenant generally manages to get some benefit out of the rent that he pays.

3712. It is a good thing for the tenant to be upon a prosperous estate?—Certainly.

3713. (*Mr. Clay.*) Do you admit the principle that rent is what is left over after the amount paid for labour and the outgoings of the farm generally?—I have often heard it so stated, but I do not know that I say so particularly. I have always thought that that was a proposition which was very generally accepted.

3714. It is generally understood in the business after he pays money for labour, and cultivating the land, the rent is what is left over; do you admit that?—I always thought it was a generally-understood proposition.

Tenant right.

3715. Regarding the tenant-right, have you any schedule to lay before the Commission as to the way in which you deal with the tenants?—I spoke of a schedule, but I am afraid that I have not brought it with me. I could let the Commission have it; I could forward it.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

3716. Have you had cases in your county coming under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Very few. There have been a certain number, but not very many. I think we have got a pretty fair system of tenant-right ourselves to start with, but I daresay they have not in other parts of the country.

3717. You consider that your system is fairly reasonable?—I think it is, and it is very general now in all agreements to put in payments for cake consumed and that sort of thing in the last year and last year but one, and the tenants are satisfied with that.

Compensation for land laid down to grass.

3718. Has your system been extended to giving a tenant extra for his good farming and laying down to grass?—For good farming, no; for laying down to grass, yes. If the tenant has laid down to grass without the landlord's consent, he generally comes to the landlord and says to him, "I have got so many acres "laid down to grass, for which I found the seeds, and "the work I did myself. Will you give me compen- "sation for this, because if not I am going to break "it up;" and the landlord now-a-days, wishing to have it under grass, pays the money. I have done it in a great many cases myself.

3719. (*Chairman.*) The alternative is, that the tenant derives a profit from breaking it up?—I do not know that he derives very much profit, but he has it in his power to do it, and then he is paid. After all he is only paid for the labour of ploughing it up.

3720. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are you speaking of outgoing tenants?—Yes, of outgoing tenants; they would be principally, because they would want the grass themselves until they left.

3721. (*Chairman.*) He would come to you before he goes?—Yes; I have arranged a good many cases.

Changes in tenancy.

3722. (*Mr. Clay.*) You have had a good many outgoing tenants?—Yes, a good many changes.

3723. It is not a very satisfactory sign?—It is not; might I say I understood I was asked more on those properties than about the average of the county generally.

3724. (*Chairman.*) I did not so understand you. As compared with previous years, have changes been frequent?—Compared with the good times they have been very much more frequent.

3725. (*Mr. Clay.*) Those tenants would be obliged to leave because the rents were too high?—No.

3726. Why did they leave?—Owing to the want of money.

3727. Their financial position is bad, I suppose?—Well, they have suffered losses, and as a rule they go into smaller holdings.

3728. Their financial position would be bad because they had paid too much rent for the land?—I do not think that is on account of the rent.

3729. What was it then?—The bad times.

3730. It comes back to the rent; if you pay too much rent you get your banking account run down?—The rent is a certain amount of the outgoings, but it represents very little in the profit and loss. That is my view, and all our big farmers would say the same. I think that they are really grateful to the landlords for what they have done in the reductions they have made for them.

3731. You have not farmed yourself?—No.

Farms in hand.

3732. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Speaking of the difference in the rent in those large estates for which you are agent, I think you mentioned that you had a good deal of land in hand on some of those estates. How do you pay the rent of those farms?—They are left out.

Rent.

3733. Was that the case in 1877?—No, they were paying rents, but I did not want to give anything that were not actual figures.

3734. But then there would be less land in your own hand in 1877 than in 1893?—Certainly.

3735. It is hardly a fair comparison of the state of the rent roll?—The rents I should put them at would make the case worse.

3736. Would not it be a better comparison if you had a reduction made of 42 per cent., and an abatement of 15 per cent. added on to that, would it not have shown a much fairer state of matters?—No, I do not think so, because I could put them at as quite as low a rent, or probably less. For instance, on one of those farms that I have left out, the reduction was more than 50 per cent. That has only come in hand this year.

3737. (*Mr. Little.*) Is it left out in the earlier statement as well as the latter?—Yes.

3738. And the comparison is between the lands now let?—Yes, it is left out in both years. You will see the three farms.

3739. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Are they the same farms, and the same acreage?—Exactly.

Combination in the milk trade.

3740. You spoke of combination, of a milk ring. Has that been going on for some time?—No; that was only started about six months ago.

3741. In practice are they able to keep or force up the price of milk in your district?—The price of milk naturally rose on account of this very dry summer. Whether they will be able to keep it up I cannot say. I am not a member of this association.

3742. But what is the price. Do you know the price that the members of this combination get for their milk per gallon?—I think 1*s.* per gallon—that is imperial gallon.

Fall in prices and reduced out-goings: comparison between 1873 and 1893.

3743. (*Mr. Little.*) You gave us in the earlier part of your evidence some particulars of the receipts for different descriptions of produce at different times on certain farms. The second one, I think, showed a reduction of 1348*l.* in the value of corn, and the flock between 1873 and 1893; 532*l.* in wheat; 81*l.* in oats;

265*l.* in sheep; 297*l.* in the lambs; and 173*l.* in the wool. Is that correct?—I have not divided it; I have not got the comparison. I gave you the totals, but I have no doubt that is right. The wool is 140*l.* It was 313*l.* as against 173*l.*

3744. Then there was 1,300*l.* less received in those two items of the flock and the corn?—I think you understood these were not actual receipts. This is a farm from which I took the produce, and I compared the two sets of prices.

3745. Then I assume that that is a fair estimate. You make the returns from corn and flock 1,300*l.* less than 20 years ago?—Certainly.

3746. And that on a farm of about 800 acres?—Yes.

3747. That is more than the entire rent I suppose. 1,300*l.* would be more than the rent of 800 acres?—The old rent.

3748. Yes?—It would of course be a great deal more than I would be prepared to let it at now.

3749. The purport of these figures is to show that the reduction in produce is greater than could possibly be met by a reduction in rent?—Yes.

3750. In the second case it was a comparison between 1883 and 1893. Was that an actual one?—It was an actual one.

3751. And there the decrease in corn and flock is from 2,924*l.* to 1,321*l.*, or a total reduction of 1,603*l.* a year?—You are taking corn and flock only.

3752. Yes, 1,603*l.* And then there has been a decrease of rent from 800*l.* to 400*l.*?—Yes.

3753. The tithe from 117*l.* to 85*l.*, and all rates from 77*l.* to 44*l.*, and labour from 966*l.* to 844*l.*?—Yes.

3754. The whole reduction in expenditure only amounts to 587*l.*?—Yes.

3755. So that of the 1,603*l.* decrease in the value of produce, 587*l.* is met by the reduction of rent, rates, and taxes and labour?—I am not sure whether you have taken the labour in.

3756. Yes, I have. Then there is 1,000*l.* there which is not met even by reduction of rent of 50 per cent. or by the reduction in rates and tithe rent-charge, and labour. Is there any other item of expenditure upon which any such reduction has been made?—No, there has been probably a slight reduction in the price of feeding stuffs and probably in the price of artificial manures. I have not got the figures.

3757. Do you think there is any possibility of making 1,000*l.* a year of reduction in any other item of expenditure?—No.

3758. The receipts as far as these figures go would be 1,000*l.* a year less on the 800*l.* after the reduction of 50 per cent. in the rent?—Yes.

3759. That is the point you wish to make by these figures?—Yes.

Rent.

3760. Now about the rent you get on this Stanmer estate, it was 9,285*l.* in 1873 and 5,391*l.* in 1893?—Yes.

3761. And are those net amounts or have the repairs to be paid out of these sums?—All the repairs have to be paid out of these sums.

3762. And supposing all repairs to be about 2,500*l.* a year as you say, the reduction in the landlord's income has been nearly 60 per cent., that is, if the same sum has to be taken off for repairs now that had to be taken off out of the larger income, the net income payable to the landlord is reduced to a greater extent than the gross rent?—Certainly. And then that does not take in tithe and land tax and various other things.

Large and small farms.

3763. You said on the whole in your neighbourhood small farms had been more successful than large ones, and you gave as one reason the labour difficulty. Would it be possible in your large farm districts to make small farms in the Chalk and Down district?—Not very easily. I do not know how you could work them better than we are working them with sheep. You cannot work small holdings with sheep. You would have the sheep all together.

3764. The large farm is rather a necessity of the Chalk and Down district?—Yes.

3765. Then the success of the small farmers may be due to some extent that they farm land which may be adapted to another purpose than sheep and corn-growing?—Yes.

3766. Their great advantage is that they do not depend on sheep and corn?—Yes.

3767. And the small farmer who consumes a considerable portion of his produce has an advantage in that respect, has he not; the fall in the price of produce consumed does not matter to him?—Not in the amount that he consumes himself.

3768. All he consumes in the shape of corn or wheat produced on the farm, or milk or butter?—No; some of the small farmers feed a certain amount for wheat, and they do not object to seeing the price low for instance, and they consume all the wheat that they grow.

Agreement

3769. I understood that very generally in your neighbourhood an agreement has been substituted for the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

3770. Has there been any dispute as to the terms of the substituted agreement being reasonable or unreasonable?—I never heard of it.

Payment of compensation.

3771. Is it your experience that farmers prefer the comparative certainty of an agreement and the simplicity of a valuation under an agreement to one under the Agricultural Holdings Act? Do they prefer compensation by agreement to compensation by the Act?—Certainly, very few of them will take up the Agricultural Holdings Act if they can help it.

3772. Do they prefer the signing of an agreement to leaving it open?—I should say that in the majority of cases we have got no agreements at all, and of course I might say no cases practically.

3773. But where there is no agreement of course the tenant could claim under the Act?—Yes.

3774. And they do not?—No.

3775. Do they claim by custom?—No, they claim under their former valuation.

3776. That is the custom?—Our principle is to be paid as you go out, just as you pay when you come in.

3777. That is the one universal custom?—Yes.

3778. The only one that is universal, is as a man enters so he quits?—Yes.

Valuation.

3779. You said that in valuations generally there was no sufficient account taken of deterioration or injury to the holding on leaving a farm. Would you think it desirable, if it were possible, to record, whenever a man entered a farm, the particular state and condition that it was in?—Certainly, for his own protection on going out.

3780. And it would be for the protection of the landlord?—And for the protection of the landlord.

3781. Would you say that that would be a desirable thing to be done on every estate by the agent of the estate?—I think it would.

3782. Would you be in favour of its being done by a public official?—We are not very keen about public officials as a rule.

3783. That is a thing fairly possible on an estate?—Yes, and I think it ought to be done. I will not say I do it in all cases, but I do it in a great many cases.

3784. (*Chairman.*) Do you do it field by field, or how is it done?—Field by field.

3785. (*Mr. Channing.*) That does not include the buildings?—Yes, it even includes the buildings in this way, that the tenant would say to me, "If I am to "keep this place in repair, will you put it in repair "first." My answer to that is, "I will not undertake "to put everything in repair, but I will undertake to "go over all the buildings if you like and give you an "account of the state that the buildings are now in, "and I shall not call upon you to do any repairs to "anything that is in a bad state." I very often do that, and therefore it does in a great many cases include the buildings.

Loans for providing buildings.

3786. (*Mr. Little.*) There is only one other point on which I should like to ask you a question. You spoke of an advance of public money for the purpose of improvements in the building of cottages. You have had experience in building cottages?—Yes.

3787. How much do you spend on a cottage for a labourer?—I do not think that you can do it under 130*l.* That, of course, is not a single cottage; that is to say, four cottages are built together.

3788. 130*l*. each. Would that include proper out-houses?—Yes; of course, presuming that you can get a water-supply easily, because sometimes the water-supply makes a great difference.

3789. I presume you would put the cottage where the water was?—We do, if we can, certainly; and of course we have to get a certificate now from the local authority.

3790. Supposing you borrow money from the Government at the lowest possible rate, the terms for repayment to be within 50 years, and the interest 5 per cent., do you think you can get a rent to recover that 5 per cent. on the 130*l*. If you borrow the capital you have to replace the money in 50 years, it would cost something like 5 per cent., would it not?—That depends on how liberal the Government would be.

3791. Take 3½ per cent., which is a little more than the price they pay for it, they must then add so much for redemption; assuming that it costs 5 per cent. to replace the money, can you let the cottages at 5 per cent. on 130*l*. and bear the costs of repairs and rates?—In the purely agricultural districts, no.

3792. Is not that the difficulty in dealing with cottages and providing new cottages that at the present time the labourer does not pay a rent which is equivalent to the interest on the outlay?—That is so undoubtedly.

3793. Do you think it would be a good thing if the labourers paid the full rent for the cottages, if they could be induced to do so, and have it made up in wages? A cottage costs 130*l*., that is paying 4 per cent.?—You can arrange with your labourer.

3794. Do you think it would be a good thing for the labourer to pay the full rent and receive a proportionately higher wage? If he paid 2*s*. 6*d*. per week he would not pay it out of his present wages; he would want 1*s*. per week advance on his wages?—You would be raising the farmer's payment, would you not, because the cottage is the landlord's business—he is the owner. There are a certain number of cottages to let with the farms, but in a great many cases with us the owners let them direct.

3795. The point I want to bring out is this: You say cottages are needed; will they be built if they cannot be made to pay?—No, I do not suppose they will.

3796. How can they be made to pay?—In the purely agricultural districts right away from a town, or village, they could not be built to pay, but where you get anywhere near a town, building them even for agricultural labourers would pay because then you would get the rent.

Land in hand.

3797. Have you made a rent out of lands in hand?—No.

3798. No rent?—No rent the last few years.

Highway rates.

3799. You complain of the cost of main roads. Is not the cost covered by the Government grant?—I think there is an unfairness in the main-road question; only certain of the roads are main roads.

3800. That depends upon the County Council?—Yes.

3801. The County Council have the power of extending them?—Yes.

3802. Do you think you have not sufficient?—Well, in some parishes they have roads that are a great deal used to railway stations, and so on, and they have not been taken over by the County Council as main roads.

3803. You are not aware whether the subvention or rather the grant from the Government covers the cost of main roads?—I am not aware. I was formerly a highway surveyor, but I have not been lately.

3804. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Are your figures that you gave just now based on actual fact, or are they hypothetical as regards the rental or the value for produce in 1873 and 1893?—In that particular case it was hypothetical as regards prices. It was actual fact as regards quantities.

3805. The prices were hypothetical then?—The prices in that particular case; in the other case they were all actual prices.

Condition of agriculture in 1873.

3806. Would 1873 be the high-water mark of agricultural prosperity?—No, I do not think so. I have taken everything in 20 years, but I simply took it as a period as being 20 years before 1893.

3807. But would that be the high-water mark of agricultural prosperity?—I should think it would be one of the best times, not for instance the highest prices of wheat.

3808. When I spoke of agricultural prosperity I was taking it generally—the general agricultural prosperity, the price of everything, cattle, wool, and sheep and corn?—I should think it would be a very good time, but not the best time.

3809. What would be the best time?—The Crimean War.

3810. Were rents as high in 1873 as they ever were?—Yes, I should think that they were. I am not speaking of my own knowledge.

3811. Were tenant farmers prosperous at that time?—Yes.

3812. And do you think they were saving money?—I am not in a position to say. I hope that they were.

3813. Did rents increase from, say, 1860 to 1873?—Yes.

3814. They did?—Yes.

3815. I presume that they have not increased as much from that date as they have decreased from 1873 to 1893?—No, I do not think so.

3816. But there was a great increase of rent from 1860 to 1873?—There was an increase, but I am afraid that I cannot tell you how much.

Rent and expenditure on improvements.

3817. Assuming that the tenant paid no rent at all would not he be able to make improvements upon his land?—He would make what are called tenants' improvements; I daresay he might make those, but he would not carry on the landlord's improvements.

3818. Would not you think that he is very likely to make landlord's improvements?—I should not say so with a yearly agreement.

3819. Not if they paid no rent?—I do not think so.

3820. But the improvements were only 25 per cent. according to your figures just now of the net rental?—Practically that is the gross rental, because the landlord's charges have got to come off that, tithe, land tax, and so on. I am giving the actual rents as paid by the tenants; and then the landlord has got to pay all the usual charges, and in addition to those charges for tithe, taxes, and so on. He also spends that amount in repairs.

3821. But my point is this: you said just now that the landlord, if he got no rent, would not make improvements?—I said that he could not.

3822. But do not you think that the tenant would make improvements?—No, I do not think so.

3823. And would not the tenant be in a better position if he paid no rent at all?—He would be in a better position, certainly, but he would not then be in a position to go and spend money in improvements, because, as I think I have shown, or tried to show, it is more than a question of rent, pure and simple.

Remission of rents.

3824. Do you think if the tenants had the farms rent free that they could live?—Am I to answer these questions, sir, because if this is to appear in print, it is a little awkward.

3825. (*Chairman.*) Supposing you put your farms rent free, would they be taken?—Some would, and some, I think, would not. I have tried really to give you, as far as I can, my idea of the situation, not only from the landlord's point of view, which, of course, I represent, but I also represent a large body of farmers in this Farmers' Club, and, therefore, I have tried to give their views.

3826. (*Mr. Lambert.*) I quite agree that your evidence is very valuable, but my point is this, would the farmers be able to enjoy a moderate amount of prosperity if they paid no rent at all?—I think I have shown on an actual farm, on a statement given me by a farmer, whose name I am ready to give, that there has been such a fall in prices, even in the last ten years, that if you took off his rent altogether, he still would be out of pocket.

3827. And you think that the farmer is not justified, at present prices, in paying any rent at all?—I really cannot answer that, unless I am obliged.

Poultry farming.

3828. On the small farms, the chicken farms, as you call them, have rents been reduced in proportion to those large farms?—No, I should not say so, certainly. I daresay that there are a great many cases where there has been no reduction at all.

3829. Not on the small farms?—Not on those particular chicken farms.

Small holdings.

3830. Why do you think that the labourers are unfit to take small holdings?—I think as a body they are not, but there are a certain number of the most intelligent of them, and the most hard-working of them, who are capable, and I think that they should have opportunities of taking small holdings.

3831. Why do not you think that they, as a general rule, are capable of improving their condition in a small holding?—To start with, as a rule, they have not got the capital. You must have a certain amount of capital; and then I do not think that they have got sufficient intelligence.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

3832. Is the Agricultural Holdings Act an inducement to good or bad farming at the end of the tenancy?—I hardly know any cases where it has been used. It has been used in one or two cases.

3833. So that having been rather a failure in your neighbourhood, it has not been put into practical operation?—It has not been put into practical operation.

Ground Game Act.

3834. Now with reference to the game. How do you let farms with regard to game; do the tenants have the right to kill ground game as they please, or only under the Ground Game Act?—Where the shooting is reserved they have only the right under the Ground Game Act.

3835. Would they appreciate a change giving them the right to kill ground game if they please?—I do not think any change is necessary. I think that they do kill it.

3836. But they are not allowed to except under the Ground Game Act?—But they do I think, excepting that they may not put traps in the open, that is all.

3837. And only one gun is allowed?—Yes.

3838. Do you think that the tenant farmers would appreciate a change of the law which would give them the right to kill ground game as they please?—No, I do not think that they would, because I think that they have practically got it.

3839. But as they have not actually got it, would not they appreciate a law making them have what they think they have got?—No, I do not think they would.

Dairy factories.

3840. (*Mr. Channing.*) I think you know a little about the experiment of Lord Hampden of collecting milk and dairy produce generally, and sending it to the large towns?—I know a certain amount of it, although I have had nothing to do with the dairy factory there.

3841. The only question is, in your opinion, does that experiment conduce to the well-being of the farmers in the neighbourhood?—It has conduced to the well-being of the farmers in the neighbourhood, particularly to the small men who send milk there.

3842. And otherwise some of them would be ousted from the markets or be in a worse position?—They would not sell it at all; it would be pretty much out of their reach; if it was not for the factory, they would not send a churn or half a churn of milk by the railway. They can send it in small quantities to the factory.

Creameries.

3843. You are in favour of agricultural co-operation in the distribution of produce?—I am in favour of creameries, and not factories.

3844. In this case you would use the separated milk on the farms?—I should have the cream sent in, and then I think that the separated milk would be used on the farms and prevent to a certain extent the adulteration in the town of new milk with separated milk.

3845. And the milk would be useful to the farmers in feeding stock and pigs and so on?—Certainly.

Reduction in rent.

3846. In what years were these heavy reductions made on those various estates?—They have been going on gradually since 1878. In 1878 they began on these estates with abatements, and there were abatements given at each audit. Gradually the abatements have become permanent reductions.

3847. But in what year should you say these heavy reductions became permanent—before 1885 or 1886?—There was a large reduction in one estate in 1886, and then there have been reductions since then.

3848. But no heavy permanent reductions were made in 1880 or 1881?—In 1880 or 1881 I think that the abatements became reductions—about that time—perhaps in 1882. When the bad times first came the landlords began to give abatements, and those were followed by permanent reductions instead of the abatements.

3849. (*Chairman.*) And that process has been continued?—That process has been continued.

3850. Abatements generally preceding reductions?—That is the kind of thing.

3851. (*Mr. Channing.*) But the immense reductions on Lord Chichester's estate—the greater part of them was not arrived at until some years after 1880?—No.

Payment of compensation.

3852. Now you speak of the time scale for compensation for improvements adopted by the valuers. Do you think that is sufficient to compensate tenants for the work that they do on their farms?—There are two scales as it were. There is the ordinary scale for the tenant-right valuation, and then another scale which has been arrived at for feeding stuffs, and boning land, and the application of lime, and that sort of thing, which is the second scale, and which has been put in force since the passing of the Agricultural Holdings Act.

3853. None of those scales would go very far back. They would not give to the farmer any compensation who had carried out continuous high farming for a long number of years?—No; you see with regard to that, our system was in Sussex to have payment for half manures and that sort of thing. That would be what you are referring to. These half manures have been generally bought up by the landlords because it was thought to be a bad thing.

Counter-claims.

3854. You spoke about the counter-claims and said, I think very justly, that the landlords ought to be protected from deterioration, but I suppose you are aware in practice, under the sixth section of the Agricultural Holdings Act, counter-claims have been made of the very widest description?—Yes.

3855. And you are probably aware that in arbitration cases, in cases under the Act, those counter-claims have been cut down enormously?—Yes.

Valuation.

3856. I understood you to say that your own practice was to schedule the condition of the land, and also the buildings so far as possible on the entry?—Not invariably.

3857. In certain cases?—Yes.

3858. The question I want to ask is this, whether you do not think that that system ought not to be adopted generally, so that the specific acts of injury to the farm, or the points in which the farm had been deteriorated by the neglect of the tenant, should be perfectly obvious on the face of the schedule of the condition of the farm to begin with?—I think it would be a very excellent thing indeed, and from the tenant's point of view that there is also injustice when he has a claim made on him for deterioration and sufficient notice is not taken of the fact that when he went in the land was in a bad state then, and that would prevent that injustice.

3859. So that it would be much better to have the whole condition of the farm ascertained beforehand and to have the actual counter-claim of the landlord limited in connexion with the certified condition?—That would be a very good plan.

3860. There is only one other question I want to ask you. You said that the farmers in East Sussex, in your neighbourhood, were disinclined to use the labour of men who had small holdings. I think I understood you to say that?—I think there is a difficulty as to that.

Labour and small holdings.

3861. You say that you want better labour. Is there any better way of getting good, strong, and sensible and skilled labourers, than giving them some occupation in the neighbourhood which would add to their wages?—No, certainly not, but that has been found to be a difficulty. I could give you an instance where that has been found to be a difficulty, where there was a lot of small holdings.

3862. You said the farmers did not think they get enough work out of the men?—Not enough work.

3863. (*Chairman.*) The men were working for themselves, that was the difficulty?—Yes.

Labourers cottages.

3864. (*Mr. Channing.*) I want to get from you whether you think that better cottages are the only means of keeping the best class of labour on the land, or whether you do not see your way to include small holdings as an inducement also?—I know that it has been found a difficulty. I know of a village where there were a great many small holdings, which have

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been going on for years and years. For 45 years the big farm there was occupied by one man, and the time that he held that farm he used to give those people who had a small holding employment, and they managed pretty well. The tenant died. A new tenant came in, and he tried employing these men for a little time, and then (he said so at all events) he found that it did not answer, because when he wanted to make his hay, and carry his hay, they were making and carrying theirs, and that therefore he did not care to employ them. He gave up employing them, and most of those small holdings have dropped to the ground.

Uncultivated land.

3865. (*Captain Thomas.*) Is there any land out of cultivation in your district?—No, I do not think I know any land out of cultivation, but I think one of the most serious aspects of the present crisis is, that the labour is so scamped that a great deal of land, particularly in the Weald of Sussex, is very nearly out of cultivation, and the enormous quantity of money that has been spent in drainage and other improvements is rapidly being lost in consequence.

Changes in tenancy.

3866. Are there many farms to let, or many farmed by owners themselves at the present time?—I do not think that there is a great deal of land farmed by owners themselves, and I do not think that there are a great many farms to let. There will be changes at Michaelmas in 1894, more than usual, owing to this bad time.

3867. When these changes take place do you expect to find the farms in bad condition?—Frightfully bad as a rule, and that is owing, I think, to the labour difficulty; although there is plenty of labour it is not good, and is dear, and therefore the labour is cut off.

3868. Are the landlords and tenants on fairly good terms?—Very good terms, I think.

3869. Are rents paid regularly?—Very fairly regularly, I think.

Arrears.

3870. Are many farmers in arrears?—No, very few, with the exception of those that I explained were this half-year in arrear, that is always so.

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The letting of farms.

3871. How do you let farms when they become vacant, by tender, or how?—Generally by advertisement, or it is always well known that so-and-so is leaving, and his farm is to be let. If the farm is a pretty good one it is let without any advertisement as a rule.

3872. Is it let by the year, or on a lease, or how are the majority of the farms let?—They are all let by the year, no farmer will take a lease.

3873. The farmers will not take a lease?—No.

3874. (*Chairman.*) You have stated to me that the difficulty with regard to the large farms was finding farmers with sufficient capital to take them?—Yes.

3875. If you find a farmer with sufficient capital, do you think he can make a profit at the present rental?—One can only suppose that they would do so, or they would not keep on, but I am not enough in in their confidence—they do not tell me.

3876. You see the importance of the question?—I think that a great many of them are hanging on simply in the hope of better times, and I think that a good many of them are making nothing.

3877. At this moment?—At this moment, I am sorry to say, I think that is so.

Poultry farming.

3878. With regard to the small chicken farms, do those men produce the corn themselves—the food on which they feed the poultry, or do they buy it?—I should think that in the real chicken-farm districts they bought it.

3879. Then the low price of food is a very important element to them, is it not?—Certainly.

3880. And consequently the price of food would be a serious matter to them?—Yes, it would certainly, in certain things; supposing they fed on wheat and you raised the price of wheat, that would be a serious thing to them.

3881. Has the low price of food appreciably increased this particular industry?—No, I do not know that it has, it is a thing that spreads gradually, their neighbours have done pretty well at it, and they have a try.

The witness withdrew.

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Mr. JOSEPH MARTIN called and examined.

3882. (*Chairman.*) Are you a farmer residing in Cambridge?—Yes, at Little Port, Isle of Ely.

3883. Are you a member of the Farmers' Association?—No.

3884. At whose request do you come here?—I believe the Chamber of Agriculture mentioned my name, and I think Mr. Little mentioned my name as well.

3885. Do you represent the views of the farmers in your district or only your own?—I represent perhaps both, because I was selected by the Chamber of Agriculture, though not a member of the Chamber of Agriculture, and they look upon me as a representative.

Size of farm.

3886. What sized farm have you?—1,500 acres.

3887. How long have you been a tenant in it?—I have grown grey in the service—a great many years.

3888. And you have 1,500 acres?—I have reduced it lately.

Reduction in rents.

3889. Has there been a considerable reduction of rent of late years?—What land I hold at the present time is my own and my family's subject to annuities and other charges. I am not much of a tenant farmer at the present time.

3890. You manage and cultivate your farm, I suppose?—Yes, I was a farmer and had 2,500 acres at one time.

Condition of agriculture.

3891. Will you describe the condition of things in your district during the last few years?—It is impossible to imagine anything worse than we are at present.

3892. (*Lord Cobham.*) Is that the fen district?—I represent the fen districts and a little high land adjoining the corn-growing districts.

3893. (*Chairman.*) Is it mainly wheat?—Wheat and other cereals. Wheat is the principal growth.

Causes of depression.

3894. Will you state briefly what your opinion is?—Well, I look upon it that the cause of depression arises from foreign importation, unrestricted competition, very much increased the last few years by unfavourable seasons, and of course the low price of corn.

Uncultivated land.

3895. Is there any land in your district out of cultivation?—Not a great deal out of cultivation; there are a few odd lots. I would just mention that in my neighbourhood there are small quantities, and a great many small owners, peasant proprietors you may say.

3896. Have they done better than the larger owners?—I do not think they have. I suppose small owners, with six, seven, or eight acres, let them to small farmers.

Reduction in rents.

3897. Has there been a great reduction of rent in those small holdings?—Not quite so much as in the large farms.

Changes in tenancy.

3898. Have there been changes of tenancy among them?—Considerable.

3899. A great many?—Yes.

3900. What do they grow?—Oats, wheat, and barley, perhaps they keep a cow, and that maintains the house.

Protection.

3901. They are not so much dependent upon the wheat as the large farmers?—Perhaps not. I suggest in the first place an increase in the price of produce. Of course I am not here to advocate Protection, because I do not approve of it; when there is only about one seventeenth of the produce grown that is necessary for our population we cannot ask for a tax upon wheat, but I am not prepared to say that it would not be desirable to put a tax on barley.

3902. Can you grow barley upon your farm?—Not much.

Price of barley.

3903. Then that would not help you much?—Not my own farm. I was informed that barley could be bought in London last week 28 stone 8 lbs. for 13*s.* 6*d.* or 14*s.*

3904. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Is your barley good enough for malting?—I should think not as a rule

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3905. (*Chairman.*) Have you kept careful accounts on your own farm for some years?—I have; I have not got any here.

Losses in farming since 1879.

3906. Could you lay before the Commission the results year by year on your farm?—I do not think I could do that, but I have no hesitation in saying that between 1879 and three years ago I lost 13,000*l*. in my own business. I should not like that to go out of this room, although I do not care much about it.

3907-8. And before that time you made profits?—Yes, the first part of my life.

3909. Up to what year?—It began in 1879.

3910. Have all the years been bad since then?—More or less. There have been some years when I have got on pretty well.

Dairy farming.

3911. Have you continued to farm your land in the same way?—I have altered my farm and gone a little into dairying, but not much.

3912. Have you laid down any grass?—Our country will not lay grass—the fen land.

3913. But still you have done more in dairying?—Yes.

3914. And grown less wheat?—Not until the last year or two, and I am sowing less this year.

Rates.

3915. What other remedies do you suggest?—Well, of course, I look upon rent as being the last thing that is to be paid. I should suggest that the rates be made an imperial charge. When I say the rates I mean the turnpike roads, schools, lunatics, and also the school attendance, the whole of those to be imperial charges.

3916. Have you been able to get a reduction of the assessment on your farm?—I am chairman of the assessment committee at Ely, and a few years ago we took 20 per cent. off all the land, and within the last four or five years we took off 10 per cent., and the last 10 per cent. we took off houses as well as the land.

3917. Therefore you have had a reduction on the assessments of 30 per cent.?—Yes, 30 per cent.

3918. Is that equivalent to the general reduction of rent in the neighbourhood?—I am afraid not; I will give you examples of rent after a while.

3919. It is probable that the assessment committee will go further in that direction?—I think they will. I think they would treat cases as they arose. Anyone that applied for a reduction they would treat that case separately.

3920. Has the rate per pound remained the same, is it about stationary?—That has been increased.

Poor rate.

3921. What has the increase been?—In 1870 the poor rates were 2*s*. 9*d*. in the pound; in 1892, the two half-yearly rates were 1*s*. rates; in 1870, the two half-yearly rates were 9*d*. each; in 1892, there were two rates of 1*s*. each; they have increased 35 per cent.

3922. How do you account for that increase?—There are so many things thrown upon the poor rates to what there used to be.

3923. Has the reduction of the assessment anything to do with it?—Not much, I should think, because there has been an increase of property added.

3924. There has been an increase in other respects?—Yes, factories, and one thing and another.

Highway rate.

3925. Then the highway rates have been increased from one rate of 5*d*., to two rates of 8*d*.?—That is a little to be explained, the extra highway rate, because in some parts we have improved the common occupation roads, and made them stone roads.

Land tax and tithes.

3926. Will you go on with your recommendations?—I should suggest that the land tax should be handed over to the county councils, and I think that the tithe wants a thorough revision. In some cases in my parish there is 12*s*. an acre tithe.

3927. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is that now, or the commutation?—That is the commuted sum.

3928. (*Chairman.*) Is it on the whole farm now?—My farm would be 5*s*., or a little more. I should think 4*s*. an acre for everything.

3929. At the present time?—I am not speaking of my own when I speak of 12*s*., but cases I know of.

3930. There has been a benefit from the reduction of the tithe?—I do not think they have suffered so much as the landowners.

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Tithes and the corn returns.

3931. You have had some benefit?—25 per cent.; I think, too, that the county market return ought to be the basis on which the tithe is based for the locality. I do not know whether you follow me.

3932. The county markets, is it?—The return of the corn for the county market ought to be the basis on which the tithe in the locality is calculated.

3933. Instead of taking the whole imperial return?—Yes. We have an instance of that in Chatteris, between St. Ives and March. They have a special Act of Parliament under which they can apply at the quarter sessions, and they take the average of the Wisbech market for the seven preceding years, and then base the tithes upon that, and why I say that I think it ought to be based on the local markets, is this: in comparing the returns, with the imperial return, I find that in some cases the weekly return makes the imperial return 3*s*. 11*d*. more than the home return.

3934. What is the cause of this difference?—It is a difference in the quality of wheat. I find that in barley, in some cases, I can give you dates of the return, there is a difference of 6*s*. 1*d*. in the quarter of barley sold at Ely and the barley returned by the imperial return; and the difference in oats is 2*s*. 5*d*. per quarter.

3935. Would the alteration in this respect afford a substantial relief?—Every little helps; in my return of wheat in the year 1892—I have kept my own returns for 40 years pretty well—my own average prices in the year 1892 are 25*s*. 4*d*. per quarter, and the imperial return is 30*s*. 3*d*. per quarter. You must take this into account: I make my return from the harvest of 1892 up to 1893, and this would be from the January to January. I am only showing the difference.

3936. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You could not give us the corresponding figures for 1835?—I cannot go so far back as that.

3937. (*Chairman.*) Would that be of inferior quality?—It was a small yield, between five and six coomb, that is 2½ to 3 quarters an acre.

3938. In 1892 it was a bad quality?—It was a bad yield and a bad quality. I think the returns ought to be made by the growers, and not by the merchants. Of course these are all little things, but if returned by the merchants, the wheat will be returned three or four times, and most likely at an advance in value.

3939. What is the next point?—I think the tithes ought to be taken annually, and not septennially, and I think there is another hardship pressing upon the landlords in schedule A.; they are not allowed to make any reduction for repairs. I can give you these returns about the tithes if you like. I have put down large farms.

The letting of large farms.

3940. What have you to say upon that?—It is very difficult to find tenants for large farms, because of the capital required; people will not invest in a losing concern.

3941. Has there been any tendency to break up the large farms into small ones?—I will allude to that. I will give an instance of a large farm that was let in the year 1878, consisting of 1,100 acres of land; the rent was then 2,000*l*., and the tithe 300*l*., all paid by the tenant; his gross payment was then 2,300*l*. He entered upon that farm in 1878, and the farm was in a bad state, and he paid the outgoing tenant a premium of 500*l*.; that farm is now reduced two-thirds.

3942. When you speak of a premium of 500*l*., what do you mean?—It was for the goodwill, it was for the privilege of taking the farm, and he paid the tenant's value afterwards.

3943. Was it a lease then?—I really cannot say that. I do not think it was; but I cannot say. It is now reduced two-thirds, and the tithe in addition to the reduction is paid by the landlord.

3944. Do you mean to say that he pays only 700*l*. a year?—That is it, and the landlord pays the tithe.

3945. The landlord's share is reduced from 2,000*l*. to 300*l*.?—No, the tithe would not be so much as it was then—about 400*l*. or 450*l*.—the tithe would not be more than 250*l*. now. As a rule, I believe larger farms are farmed better than smaller ones where you can get tenants; they employ more labour, make more meat, and keep a larger amount of sheep and cattle. Now I should like to give an instance of the selling value of the farm. 880 acres of land cost, about 14 years ago, 23,000*l*., the amount expended upon the buildings and house was 5,000*l.*, since the purchase. It was mortgaged at the time for 20,000*l.*, leaving a margin of 8,000*l.* In 1891 the owner died.

3946. Did the owner farm it himself?—Yes, he had let it, but the tenant left it and he farmed it himself. They could neither sell nor let it, and they advertised it; the mortgagees took possession, and they have got it now. The farm adjoining was sold last year, quite as good land, and it made about 10*l.* an acre, and if this farm were valued at the same price it would make a loss of 19,200*l.* in about 12 years.

3947. Have the mortgagees been able to let it?—No.

3948. Do they farm it themselves?—They farm it themselves. Some land in my own parish in 1879 was let to three or four tenants at 30*s.* an acre, the tenant paying the tithe and the drainage tax; it is now let to a man at 10*s.* and 12*s.* 6*d.* an acre, the landlord paying the tithe.

3949. Are these farms suitable only for the growing of wheat?—Only for the growing of wheat and corn and cereals.

Small holdings.

3950. Mainly wheat?—Mainly wheat. Small farms are more easily let, because tenants with a family, with one or two lads do all the work. As a rule buildings on these small occupations are neglected by the tenants. The rents have fallen from 75 to 25 per cent. on these small farms. I will give you two or three very short examples. In 1872 404 acres were let on lease for 450*l.*, the landlord paying the tithe and drainage tax—for the year 1890 the net rent paid was 360*l.* In 1892 the same farm was let to the same tenant for 150*l.* gross; deduct tithe and tax 75*l.*, and that gives a net income to the landlord of 75*l.* (of course he has to do repairs); instead of 360*l.*, nearly a reduction of 80 per cent., and this adjoins a hard road, and is within two miles of a railway station on the main line.

3951. (*Lord Cobham.*) Has it got any permanent grass on it?—Not a great deal. I would give another instance: 273 acres in 1876 made 360*l.*, tithe and drainage tax deducted 54*l.* 12*s.* 0*d.*; at that time the rent was 305*l.* 8*s.* 0*d.*; in 1892 it was let for 143*l.* tithe and drainage tax 54*l.* 12*s.* 0*d.*; income 88*l.* 8*s.* 0*d.*, a reduction of 70 per cent.

3952. (*Chairman.*) With regard to those farms do you know those farms yourself?—I think I do.

3953. Can the tenants with that reduction pay their way?—I do not think they will. I think they are inclined to give up. Then there are 400 acres within a mile and half of a church and schools just built, and a railway station; the rent formerly was 400*l.* and now it is 100*l.*, that is 75 per cent. reduction.

3954. And these cases occur within your own Union?—They are within six miles of my house.

3955. Are they cases which would come before your assessment committee?—I do not think that they would. There is only one that would come before the assessment committee and that is in a separate parish, and I do not think that would even.

3956. (*Lord Cobham.*) You are not speaking exclusively of a fen farm?—This large farm that I speak of is not fen land, but I can give an instance of high land the same. The small farms as a rule keep no sheep, and not a large quantity of cattle, and that is a consideration because you get no meat for the people. There are a great many small holdings in my parish, but as a rule they have no premises on them; a man will buy a small piece of six acres, he will put a house and a few premises on it, and then he will hire two or three lots so as to make up his holding. My district is very peculiar because it was formerly all sea; it has been reclaimed and drained artificially, and then there are small quantities of land, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 20 acres. In the small holdings all the work is done by the tenants and, as a rule, they keep no animal except a pig and a cow.

3957. (*Chairman.*) What sized holdings are you speaking of now?—Well, they vary from 5 acres up to 50 acres. But I was going to say that 193 tenants in my parish occupy between 5 acres and 90 acres.

3958. Are those men living wholly upon the land?—Some are and some are not. It is rather against us as farmers. They have perhaps ground and they want to go and till their ground when we want them.

3959. What is the smallest amount of land that men occupy who live wholly by the land?—From 20 to 25 acres.

3960. Are there many?—Several.

3961. (*Mr. Everett.*) How many of those farmers are there in your parish?—193 men with between 5 acres and 90 acres.

3962. (*Chairman.*) Men who are occupying less than that have to supplement their work by going out as labourers to others?—Yes.

3963. But you find there is a difficulty very often that when their services are wanted they are tilling their own ground?—That is just it. We have a great many allotments. The feoffees, who are a charity, let 186 allotments of an acre and more.

3964. Is there much demand for them?—A very fair demand. The feoffees pay all outgoings, and they charge from 42*s.* to 20*s.* per acre.

3965. Have those rents been reduced during the bad times or not?—They are considerably less than they were.

3966. But in the same proportion as the others?—In the same proportion as the others. We have not had so many allotments till the last six, seven, or eight years.

3967. So that you cannot compare them?—No.

3968. The rent seems a fair one?—It is not extravagant.

3969. But it is not very low?—We have to pay 6*s.* and 7*s.* an acre for drainage and the tithes and outgoings; they pay nothing but the rent.

3970. (*Lord Cobham.*) What do they grow, potatoes and cabbages?—Yes.

3971. Wheat?—A little barley and a little wheat. And then there are some benefit clubs, which also purchase land, and they let their land in allotments as well.

3972. (*Chairman.*) Do the labourers gradually rise from the cultivation of allotments to small holdings, and then go on to larger farms?—Some do. I do not know whether you would like a little analysis of the parish which I have got here (*handing in the same*).

3973. It is the parish of Littleport. There are four farms above 1,000 acres, three farms between 500 acres and 1,000 acres, and four farms between 100 acres and 500 acres, and all the others are small holdings?—I think the next point is the future of the land, is not it?

3974. Yes?—Unless we have a very different price of corn a great deal of land must go out of cultivation, as far as the growth of cereals is concerned, and merely return to grass; the result of that will be that the labouring population will be driven into the towns.

3975. Will that apply equally to the small holdings that you spoke of?—They employ no labour on the small holdings, and the man works his holding with his own family.

3976. I mean the change in cultivation?—As Mr. Birt once told me when I asked about the railway, he said, "It does not pay," and the growing of corn does not pay, and we shall not grow corn if it does not pay.

3977. You are going on to say something about small holdings?—I mean 50 acres, and 90 acres, and 150 acres, they do the work themselves. To turn the large farms into small holdings means expending a large amount of capital.

3978. (*Lord Cobham.*) What is the drainage tax?—It varies, in some places it is 7*s.* an acre, and in my own particular district it is a little under 2*s.*, it varies considerably according to the season. If it is a very wet season a large amount of course is spent in draining the land by the purchase of coal.

3979. As the land goes out of cultivation, the drainage tax would not have to be paid?—No, but we are obliged to do it. 150 years gone by a great deal of land was sold for the payment of taxes.

3980. (*Chairman.*) This return that I have in my hand is a return of about 200 holdings of between 10 acres and 100 acres?—Yes.

3981. Of which 170 are between 10 acres and 50 acres. I want to know with regard to those holdings, whether they will be able to cultivate them?—If I speak what I know, they are very much behind in the rents where it ought to have been paid. I do not know whether they can pay or not. No doubt they are in a better position than a day labourer.

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3982. Have they struck out new lines of cultivation?—There is not that kind of thing in our district.

3983. There has been no cultivation of fruit in your district?—Not in my particular district; around Wisbech and other places there has been to a large extent. I do not think it would answer in our district.

3984. Why is that?—It wants silty land, and ours is more a black moor.

3985. What else have you got to say?—I should be happy to answer any question; I do not know of anything else.

3986. (*Mr. Channing.*) Are you near Histon, that part of Cambridge?—No; I am not very near, perhaps 15 miles off I should think.

Losses in farming.

3987. (*Mr. Lambert.*) You said you had lost 14,000*l.*; was that as a tenant?—Partly as a tenant and partly as a landlord.

3988. How much have you lost as a tenant?—I do not know. I cannot tell you, because I kept the accounts together as the tenant and landlord.

3989. Could you give an approximate estimate?—I could not.

3990. Did you lose anything as a tenant?—I did. You get sometimes as I did in one or two years. In 1892 I grew five coomb an acre, 2½ quarters, and sometimes it was worth 11*s.* per coomb; that would pay expenses.

3991. You cannot give an answer as to how much you lost as a tenant?—No.

3992. You said that people will not invest in a losing concern—why?—Because it will not pay.

3993. Presuming there are no outgoings and no rent, would it pay then to farm?—No rent, no tithes, and no taxes it might pay.

3994. Presuming that there was no rent to pay, do you think it would pay then?—I do not think you could make it pay at the present price.

3995. So that all the rent the farmers are paying is really being paid out of their own pockets?—I think the major part is. I will give you an instance of a piece of high land, 15 acres of barley, and 3 acres produced 50 coomb at 13*s.* per coomb.

3996. The major part of the rent is being paid out of the farmers' capital?—I think so.

3997. You said in years gone by land was sold merely for the payment of taxes; have you any proof of that?—It is only what I have heard. I believe there are records which state it.

3998. So that really land has gone up from that amount, merely the payment of taxes to prices that you have quoted in 1873?—But when it was sold for the payment of taxes the land was undrained and uncultivated; it was a wild morass.

3999. (*Mr. Little.*) You have had a good deal of experience as a landlord, as a tenant, as an occupying owner, and as a general adviser?—I have.

4000. In all those capacities?—I have.

4001. I do not know whether you have acted as agent, but you have constantly been called upon to advise members of your own family and others both as tenants and as landlords?—I have.

Description of district.

4002. As regards the district which you come from, it is a district I know very well. I think I may put it that it is one of very varied ownership and occupation?—Yes, and quality too.

4003. And there are all classes of owners and all classes of occupiers, are there not?—Yes.

4004. A great proportion of the owners would be middle-class people?—Yes.

4005. And widows?—A great many widows.

4006. Generally representatives of people who want investments?—Yes.

4007. Very few of the "bloated aristocrats" are about, I believe?—There is only one peer that has any land.

4008. A great deal of the land has been tilled by farmers in previous years who bought their occupations?—Yes.

4009. And left them to their families?—Yes.

4010. The fen land has been made entirely by the application of capital?—Yes.

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4011. It would be worthless if it had not been for the expenditure of the capital?—Certainly.

4012. And maintained in its present condition by continual outlay, in keeping up banks, and draining?—Yes.

4013. That is an annual cost?—Yes.

4014. If that were neglected for a very short time the land would revert to a condition of absolute worthlessness?—Water, I think, in some cases.

4015. The division of land was made in the seventeenth century?—It was.

4016. Lots of land were given to the owners of commonable messuages, in doles of 6 to 10 acres each?—Yes.

4017. And those have remained small properties?—Yes, called adventurers.

4018. They generally have not been amalgamated?—No.

Large and small farms compared.

4019. There have been always a large number of small holdings?—Yes.

4020. Is it your opinion that small holders have been uniformly more successful than the large owners?—Up to recent times I should say not, but latterly I think they have been.

4021. Would you say that they have been as improving as the larger farmers?—Certainly not.

4022. Would the drainage works have ever been carried out by small proprietors?—They are always cheeseparing whenever we have our meetings.

Landlords and tenants.

4023. Having this experience which you spoke of as a landlord and as a tenant and occupying owner do you think the land laws have had any appreciable effect in producing this depression?—No; I do not know how you mean exactly.

4024. Has the law of the land as regards the landowner—the devolution of land—had any effect?—I should say not.

4025. You are not aware from your experience?—Not at all.

4026. Has it had an appreciable effect in this depression?—It has not.

4027. Has the relation of the landlord and tenant been satisfactory?—I think the understanding is very satisfactory, and the terms upon which the land is let are as satisfactory as they can be.

Yearly agreements.

4028. Is it usual to let land verbally without a written agreement?—Very often from year to year.

4029. Is it usual to restrain the tenant as regards the course of his crops, and the sale of his produce?—Yes, to a certain extent.

Freedom of cultivation.

4030. They have the right to remove the produce, or to consume it?—Yes.

4031. And this freedom of cultivation and sale of produce has not prevented the farmers from feeling the great depression?—No, certainly not.

4032. Then, in your case, and in the case of a great many of your neighbours, you would not say that an alteration in the land laws, or in the law between landlord and tenant, would be of any great benefit?—I cannot suggest any alteration; the only alteration is a better price for the produce.

Rates.

4033. I do not know whether you are aware of the return which was recently issued of the amount of the rates at different periods?—No, I am not aware of it.

4034. Because that would tend to show that the rates had diminished in amount?—I have not seen it.

4035. The highway rates have risen in your parish in consequence of improvements?—Yes, within the last 15 years we have made miles of occupation road, which was really soft road, into hard road.

4036. And that is not a subject of complaint?—That is for your own benefit; it is for the benefit of the occupiers.

Losses in farming.

4037. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Can you give us any particulars of that loss of 14,000*l.* you mentioned; in what way your balances were made up showing the loss?—In 1879 we had an awful harvest, and what I lost that year was not quite all the money, but a great loss.

4038. What I am aiming at is to know if you could state the loss. Is it a loss that appears in a balance-sheet?—I always make a valuation at the beginning of every year, and I value all stock and produce and

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everything; and if I had known that you wished to ask me that question I would have brought up my books.

4039. If you had begun the valuation in 1879, so much stock and produce at a certain price, and left off at a later date with the stock and produce at a lower price, then a part of the loss is simply that you have got the same things at less prices, it is not actual loss?—As a rule, when I make the valuation I generally make the same amount of cattle in live stock one year to compare with another, because as it is floating capital I do not take advantage of it, so that I keep the stock at the same amount of money.

4040. It is a cash loss?—It is a cash loss.

Tithes and the corn returns.

4041. Then you would like to see the tithe upon the local price?—Yes.

4042. You simply base your idea upon the fact that these local prices are less now than the imperial prices?—No.

4043. It would be very much in your favour?—I do this because our produce is of inferior quality.

4044. But the difference would be so much in your favour?—It would be in our favour.

4045. Have you considered the question that in the original tithe commutation, if you had based the commutation upon the local prices, you might not be any better off than with the imperial prices?—I do not know that we should not.

4046. But you have not considered that point?—No.

Drainage rates.

4047. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Do you pay a drainage rate?—Yes.

4048. Is it a heavy one in Littleport?—I am a chairman of the district; it is 2*s.* an acre. This is for draining of the land, pumping the water into the river; that is the plain English of it.

4049. I suppose the tenant has to pay that as a rule?—Not as a rule; the landlord pays it. Of course it is a matter of agreement, but as a rule the landlord has to pay.

Farms in hand.

4050. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are there many farms vacant?—Several are kept by the landlords who cannot let them.

4051. Is the amount of land increasing or diminishing?—I do not think there is much difference. There are a great many notices given to leave next Michaelmas.

Sale of straw.

4052. Do you sell your straw and hay off?—I do a little. There is no restriction; they do as they like.

4053. Is there a sale of straw?—Just this year.

4054. But not as a rule?—I tried of course this year.

4055. Would it stand the carriage to London?—We sell it to dealers on the spot, and they send it to different places.

Yield of farm since 1886.

4056. (*Chairman.*) Was the yield of your farm very bad in 1892?—Yes.

4057. And again this year?—It is better this year. We have no oats or barley.

4058. Is your produce very bad this year?—Oats and barley a fair yield.

4059. And the prices are very low?—Yes.

4060. Excepting those two bad years 1892 and 1893, do you think that you would have incurred a loss in the last six or seven years?—I think I should. The price is nothing; if you get a fair crop the price is so low that there is no margin.

4061. I wanted to know your experience. Substracting the last two years, what was your experience of the last six or seven years?—Two or three years ago I maintained my position, but the last two years I have lost, and previous to the last two years, for two or three years previously I maintained my position.

4062. (*Mr. Little.*) I think you said you could furnish us with the exact yield of your land?—I can get it, but I have not got it.

4063. (*Chairman.*) I should like to see your results for each year?—I will let you have them. (*See* Appendix A., XII.)

Small holdings.

4064. I see from the figures you have laid before us that nearly one third of the whole parish, which I think is 16,000 acres, is held in small holdings?—I believe it is.

4065. To estimate what they have done it is a very material question to ascertain whether they have done better than the larger farmers?—I do not think there is much in it.

4066. I thought they had done better in this respect that they had not suffered so much from the labour question?—Because they have done the labour themselves and they live off the allotments, or whatever they can.

4067. I presume also they grow a less proportion of corn?—They do grow a less proportion of corn but they make no beef or mutton. It is entirely grown to feed the pigs and cows.

4068. They grow for themselves?—That is it.

4069. For their own consumption?—That is so.

4070. And therefore the outgoings are not so seriously reduced?—No.

4071. They do not sell a large quantity of corn?—They have not it to sell.

4072. What do they sell?—It depends on what the corn is.

4073. Have the pigs the potatoes?—Yes.

4074. And it is possible that they may not be so seriously affected by the low price of corn?—They have no Friday to contend with and we have, and that makes all the difference. They have no wages to pay.

4075. (*Lord Cobham.*) You would be worse off for labour without these allotments?—I do not think so.

4076. Does not it keep the labour in the parish?—I do not think so.

4077. (*Mr. Everett.*) When was this land reclaimed?—About 1660.

Tithes.

4078. You spoke of the tithe on this land; how comes that to be titheable?—That is a question; when it was titheable.

4079. It was titheable by Act of Parliament?—It was a matter of arrangement, confirmed perhaps under the Commutation.

4080. It was tithed under the Common Law of the country was it?—I do not know. It has always been a question to me how they could get the tithe there.

4081. It was not given by pious donors?—No, because this land was all water.

4082. All the land was water?—I understand that when one of the mains was cut Dutchmen were engaged to carry out the work and carried the earth in baskets on their heads. This was about the year 1660.

4083. Do you know what happened to this land between the years 1820 and 1840, because we had a very similar fall in prices then? Do you happen to know anything about that period?—Something like the depression now though not so severe.

4084. It did not go out of cultivation then?—No.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

Ninth Day.

Friday, 8th December 1893.

PRESENT:

The RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.	CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq.
The Right Hon. Baron VERNON.	ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.	JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.	GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.	WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.	WALTER HUME LONG, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.	CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., *Assistant Secretary.*

Sir GARDNER ENGLEHEART, C.B., and Mr. JOHN LEONARD BOLDEN, called and examined.

Sir G. Engleheart, C.B., and Mr. J. L. Bolden.

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4085. (*Chairman to Sir Gardner Engleheart.*) You are Clerk of the Council and Registrar to the Duchy of Lancaster?—Yes.

4086. And you have held that position for 20 years?—Since the early part of 1872.

4087. And who is the gentleman with you?—Mr. Bolden is the Surveyor-General, and has been so since about 1886.

4088. Were you examined before the Duke of Richmond's Commission in 1880?—I was.

4089. And the gentleman who then held the position of Surveyor-General was then examined?—Yes, Mr. Cartwright.

Acreage and locality of estates.

4090. The Commission do not wish to go over the ground that you went over on that occasion, and therefore I will ask you general questions. You then stated to the Duke of Richmond's Commission that the agricultural estates of the Duchy of Lancaster consisted of about 35,000 acres, of which 32,000 was land let in farms?—Yes.

4091. And that they were scattered over 13 different counties?—Yes.

4092. But that the chief estates were in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Staffordshire, and Middlesex?—Yes, but it is slightly altered now. We have sold nearly 2,000 acres in the last 13 years, and the total amount is now 33,000 and a few odd acres, of which part is wood. We have rather extended the woodland to 2,300 acres.

Beneficial holdings.

4093. Is that property held as farm property?—It was partly farm property and partly beneficial holdings.

4094. What do you mean by "beneficial holdings"?—It was let on long leases, sometimes with a premium when the lease was originally granted, and it has been since improved.

Tenure in 1880 and 1893 compared.

4095. I think you stated in 1880 that the greater part of this property, in fact with small exceptions, was then let on lease?—Yes; but in this respect the greatest change has taken place.

4096. I wanted to ask you if a considerable change has taken place in the interval?—Yes. About seven-eighths was then let on lease and one-eighth in yearly holdings. Now the proportions are entirely altered, and two-thirds of the whole property is let on yearly tenancy and only one-third on lease.

4097. In the interval the leases on a large portion of the property have fallen in and the tenants have not been willing to renew them but remain on as tenants from year to year?—We never renew beneficial leases but take advantage of the termination of the lease to let the farms to tenants from year to year.

Beneficial holdings.

4098. What was the proportion of beneficial leases?—The proportion of the beneficial leases to rackrent in 1880 was about 15 to 17, the 15 represents the beneficial leases.

4099. The beneficial leases have fallen in and you have not renewed them?—They have fallen in, except to the extent of 1,250 acres.

Agreements.

4100. In the case of the ordinary leases have they fallen in in the interval?—Some of them have, and have been renewed to other farmers.

4101. Have you found it possible to renew the leases or are the farmers unwilling to renew the leases?—We hardly ever give leases; we almost always give yearly tenancies.

4102. Is that because the tenants are unwilling or is it as a matter of policy that you do that?—We do not object. It arises partly from the security which was sought formerly in a long lease being now gained under the Agricultural Holdings Act, and partly that they take very short views of agricultural life, and like to be free to be off.

4103. They are rather afraid of the future?—They are afraid of the future.

Rent.

4104. I think you stated in 1880 that the average holding was about 150 acres and that the average rent then of those, excluding the beneficial holdings, was about 1*l.* 1*s.* 3*d.*?—That was only upon some selected estates. Three estates were selected.

4105. They were given as samples of the estates where there were no beneficial holdings?—Quite so.

4106. And, therefore, they give a fair average of what the rent was?—Yes. We have now selected three estates. We could not select the same for many reasons. We have tabulated them, and I propose to hand them in if you would like to see them. (*See* Appendix A., XIII.)

Reductions in rent.

4107. Since 1880 the depression I suppose has been severely felt on your property?—Very much so.

4108. Will you state what has been your experience during that time?—You mean in the depreciation of the rent?

4109. In the fall of rent?—Taking the whole estates with this diminished acreage I think you will find that the average, than which nothing is more deceptive, was 17*s.* 6*d.* per acre upon the 35,000 acres in 1880, and now, I think it has fallen 1*s.* upon the 33,000 acres; it is about 16*s.* 5*d.* As I said before, it really is most deceptive.

4110. The comparison is fallacious because the former figure included a very large amount of beneficial leases?—No doubt.

4111. Of which the rent was small in proportion to the value of the land?—No doubt.

4112. Apparently a considerable number of those leases has fallen in, but notwithstanding that the rent has been reduced by 1*s.* per acre; but that would not give a fair comparison of what the real effect has been?—I think I could give it more closely than that. Taking the present rackrent and excluding the land which we

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have in hand, and excluding moor lands, which are merely shooting properties I think the average rack-rent is about 1*l.* 6*s.* per acre.

4113. It is that now?—It is that now, and I think in 1880 it was 1*l.* 5*s.* per acre. I think it has slightly increased, but then, as I said before, the beneficial holdings, having fallen in, made the problem very difficult to work out.

4114. You are not comparing like with like?—It is almost impossible to compare like with like.

4115. We must confine ourselves rather more to generalities, without attempting to compare the state of things now with those of 1880?—I think Mr. Bolden will be able to give you more information upon particular estates than I can pretend to, because he is more in touch with the matter.

4116. (*To Mr. Bolden.*) Perhaps you can give a comparison as to the present position as compared with that of 1880?—May I hand in some tabulated statements? I refer to them in that paper which you have there, and there they are all (*handing in the same*). These are the Duchy farm leases.

Acreage and rental.

4117. I cannot go through the figures, but you would perhaps tell us the general effect of them?—The total acreage is 33,264 acres divided into 13 counties, and the total rent, exclusive of fee-farm rents and quit-rents, and rents of quarries, foreshore, and encroachments, 47,827*l.*; the acreage of the agricultural lands is 24,116, and the rent is 20,402*l.* (*See* Appendix A., XV.)

4118. (*Lord Vernon.*) Does that include woods and water?—No.

4119. Is it purely cultivated land?—No, it takes in about 7,000 acres of moor-land farms in Yorkshire; but it is exceedingly difficult to separate them.

4120. Is that 4,000 acres let on rackrent now?—The amount of rackrent is 17,000*l.* odd. (*Mr. Bolden.*) Excluding moorland, the rent is 19,800*l.*

4121. (*Chairman.*) Can you compare the present state of things with what it was eight years ago?—Yes.

Estate in Staffordshire: reduction in rent.

4122. Will you give it to us; does that include shooting rent?—The tenants have all the shooting. In Staffordshire I think you must go back 20 years, and you must take it that the average reduction in rent in Staffordshire is something like 25 per cent.

4123. (*Lord Vernon.*) Is that in Needwood Forest?—That is in Needwood Forest.

4124. (*Chairman.*) What is the size of that estate?—3,500 acres.

4125. And going back 20 years the reduction is 25 per cent.?—Yes. I think you must go back something like 20 years.

4126. Since then the reductions began?—There were temporary allowances made from about 1878, when the bad time began—1878 and 1879—and these temporary allowances went up to 1887; then the rents were revised and a new valuation was made, and the rents were permanently reduced.

4127. Has there been any further reduction since those abatements?—Not much.

Position of the tenants.

4128. Have the tenants paid their rents fairly well since then?—Yes.

4129. Have there been many changes of occupation?—Very few—scarcely any.

4130. Are we to take it that, in your opinion, the rents are such as the tenants can fairly pay?—I think so. I made the valuation myself.

4131. Have you any land in hand there?—No. (*Sir Gardner Engleheart.*) Last year, after the audits, the whole arrear in Staffordshire was 2*l.*

4132. (*Lord Vernon to Mr. Bolden.*) What is the average of that land in Staffordshire?—I do not think you could take an average; the farms vary so very much indeed. It is mostly grass land—some of it very poor, and some of it pretty good. It would be very fallacious to give an average.

4133. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are there no arrears to write off?—In Staffordshire none. Last year there was nothing.

4134. In 20 years you must have knocked off something?—Yes.

Total acreage and rental.

4135. (*Mr. Giffen.*) What is the total rent in Staffordshire?—Do you mean in the purely agricultural part?

4136. Of that 3,500 acres?—4,500*l.*

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4137. (*Lord Vernon.*) Is the whole of the Needwood Forest included in that acreage?—No; Needwood Forest has been divided into a number of different holdings.

4138. What you own in Needwood Forest is included in that?—Yes.

4139. There is a very considerable acreage of woodland there?—But I have not included woodland, there are 1147 acres of woods. To be perfectly accurate it is 3,600 acres, and the rent is 4,504*l.* now.

4140. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is it mostly grassland?—Yes, mostly.

Reductions in rent.

4141. (*Lord Vernon.*) When did the drop of 25 per cent. take place principally?—There were temporary allowances made from 1878 and 1879 up to 1887. The allowances I should think have varied from 15 to 25 per cent. Then the farms were re-valued, and what was then a temporary allowance was made into a permanent reduction.

4142. (*Chairman.*) And there have not been more than the average changes of occupation?—No.

4143. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Can you give the extreme reductions in both instances, the lesser and the greater reduction upon a single farm?—The most is 50 per cent. in the case of a farm of 159 acres which was reduced from 158*l.* to 80*l.*

4144. (*Chairman.*) That is the extreme reduction?—Yes.

4145. Then in the others the reduction must have been less than 25 per cent.?—Yes; the average reduction was something like 22 per cent., and from that to 25 per cent.; the lowest was 15 per cent., that was nearly all grass.

Shooting rights.

4146. And the tenants in all these cases have the shooting?—Yes.

4147. Do they let their shooting or keep it?—As a rule they let it.

Estate in Lancashire. Rent.

4148. Can you give us another illustration from another part of the country?—Take an estate in Lancashire, Myerscough (*see* Appendix A., XIII). 1,382 acres, that was let out on a beneficial lease until 1886, and I cannot tell you what the rent was exactly, or what the reductions were. I know what the tenant lessee got for it, I know what the middleman got in 1886, and I know what the rent is now; but I do not know what reductions were made.

4149. Then it was held by a middleman from you, who sub-let it to farmers?—Yes.

4150. And what was the rent he was able to get?—In 1886 when it fell in hand his rental was 2,572*l.* I know he made some temporary allowances, I believe about 10 per cent.

Expenditure on improvements.

4151. What are the rents now?—We have made an expenditure of 13,000*l.* upon it, I am speaking in round figures.

4152. In improvements?—In improvements; in respect to the drainage we had a very great difficulty in getting an outfall from the water, and expensive pumping machinery was required. We did a great deal of ordinary fixed draining in addition, and put a number of new buildings up, and that was the total outlay of capital. If you deduct 5 per cent. for the outlay made on capital——

4153. Is that what you charge the tenants?—No, we do not charge them anything.

Rent.

4154. That, I suppose, was on account of the difficulty of the times, but ordinarily what would you charge the tenants for improvements?—Every case would be treated on its own merits. I do not think I can give a general answer. After deducting 5 per cent. interest upon the capital employed, and after deducting what we have to pay annually—the cost of our pumping engines and the engineer's wages—our rent now comes out at 2,201*l.* That makes a reduction of 33 per per cent.

4155. (*Mr. Lambert.*) I have got it 2,552*l.*?—It was 2,572*l.* in 1886.

Expenditure on improvements.

4156. (*Chairman.*) What is the actual rent that you are now receiving? Is that 2201*l.*?—2,365*l.* is the gross; off that has to come 164*l.*, the average annual cost of the pumping and the man's wages. (*Sir

Gardner Engleheart.) As to the 5 per cent., we take from our Consol Fund to make these improvements. In theory we ought to give Her Majesty 2¾ per cent. on those Consols so taken, and at the same time to establish a sinking fund, which in a certain number of years would produce the capital so expended, and the 5 per cent. is to cover both those.

4157. (*Lord Cobham.*) How many years does it take you to replace that borrowed capital?—For the buildings it is perhaps 40 or 50 years, and for the drainage 20 or 25 years. It depends upon the nature of the improvement.

4158. (*Chairman to Mr. Bolden.*) Is this property grass?—It is partly grass and partly arable.

4159. Then the actual reductions of rent have not been considerable to the tenants, but you have improved their position by that large outlay?—Yes.

Changes of tenancy.

4160. Have there been many changes of occupation there or not?—Very few. One man gave up his farm and we divided it into two, and the other tenancies have simply been family changes; for instance, one man gave up to his brother.

Size of farms.

4161. What is the average size of the farms? Is the average small?—I will tell you the size of the farms. There was one farm of 300 acres, another of 165 acres, and the others vary from 111 acres down to 14 acres.

4162. They are generally small farms?—Yes.

4163. I suppose there is no land in hand there?—No.

4164. Have the tenants all round paid their rents?—Yes, all but one.

4165. And in the one case where there has been a change you split it up into two?—Yes.

4166. And you found it desirable to do so?—Yes.

Estate in Lincolnshire.

4167. Will you now go on to your other farms?—There is another estate in Lincolnshire (*see* Appendix A., XIII). In 1880 the acreage was 876 acres; the gross rent in 1880 was 1,076*l.*, and the rent now is 944*l.*, and there has been an outlay on improvements of 2,000*l.*

Reductions in rent.

4168. The reductions of rent have not been considerable there?—About 19 per cent., I think, it works out.

4169. Does it work out at 19 per cent. if you take into account the interest on improvements?—Yes.

4170. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is that grass or arable?—Mixed, chiefly arable.

4171. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Whereabouts is it?—In Lincolnshire. They are scattered farms; there are five of them, and some of them are in what is called the East Fen, one in Midville, and some near New Bolingbroke.

4172. (*Mr. Little.*) That is fen land?—It is fen land.

4173. (*Chairman.*) Have the tenants lately paid all their rent?—Yes, there is nothing owing.

4174. Have there been temporary abatements quite lately?—Last year.

4175. And this year, will it be necessary to make abatements?—No, I got the rent the other day.

Changes of tenancy.

4176. Have there been any changes of occupation there?—One person got old and asked to transfer the lease to another tenant.

4177. But have there been any changes of tenants beyond that?—Not since 1885.

4178. Now let us have one other estate, a considerable estate?—You have got the three we took down, Needwood, Myerscough, and one in Norfolk (*see* Appendix A., XIII).

4179. I want to know about Norfolk and Yorkshire?—I can give a number of farms and a comparison of individual farms.

Estate in Yorkshire.

4180. The general result of Yorkshire we should like to have; can you give the general result?—If you take 20 years they will average about 22 or 23 per cent. reduction.

Acreage and rental.

4181. What is the acreage there?—Exclusive of moorland farms 7,134 acres.

4182. What is the present rental?—7,894*l.*

4183. Is that all let at rack-rents, or on beneficial leases?—On rack-rents.

4184. The reduction, taking into account the expenditure, has been 22 per cent.; is that so?—About that.

4185. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is that arable or pasture?—Mixed.

4186. (*Chairman.*) Have there been any changes of occupation or not?—Some; not a great many.

4187. And have the tenants paid their rents lately?—As a rule, yes.

Estate in Norfolk.

4188. Then will you go on to Norfolk?—There we have 4,261 acres in hand, farming ourselves, and we have 800 acres let.

4189. When did these lands fall in?—They fell in hand at various times; the first in 1878.

4190. Whereabouts in Norfolk is that?—A place called Methwold, some six or eight miles from Brandon. Some is fen land.

4191. The first farm fell in in 1878?—Yes.

4192. When did the others fall in?—At various times up to the present. In 1883, three fell in, in 1885, some more, and one in 1889.

4193. How do you account for the difference in this estate compared with the others?—In two parishes, Methwold and Feltwell, there are about 27,000 acres, and I believe something like 23,000 acres are in the owner's hands.

4194. (*Mr. Everett.*) What class of land is that?—Partly fen land and partly thin gravelly land on chalk—very poor land all of it.

Rent.

4195. (*Chairman to Sir Gardner Engleheart.*) What was the rent before these changes took place?—I think I could answer that. Up to 1879 we got about 7*s.* 6*d.* per acre—not a net rent, but a gross rent of 7*s.* 6*d.* per acre, on which I laid out a considerable sum of money in hopes of better times which were not realised. We expected it would rise to 10*s.* per acre, and that was the rent which was inserted in the new lease, which the tenant was ultimately to pay, but we never got more net than 5*s.* per acre.

4196. And eventually the tenants were unable to pay that?—Yes.

Land in hand.

4197. And they gave up, and you have had the farms on hand since?—(*to Mr. Bolden.*) What is your experience?—Until last year we made a profit; last year we made a loss.

4198. (*Lord Vernon.*) Was that after paying your rent?—Oh dear no.

4199. (*Chairman.*) What did your profit amount to; did it amount to your expected rent of 7*s.* 6*d.* per acre?—No.

4200. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What kind of farms are there on the 800 acres that are let?—One is a good farm. The 800 acres are let at 500*l.* a year.

4201. (*Chairman.*) Which is better than the other?—Some of it is fen land, but what is not fen land is good land.

4202. Have you tried to let this land from time to time in the interval?—Yes.

4203. And you failed to do so?—Yes.

4204. We may take it that the difference between the condition of that estate and the others is that this land is extremely poor?—Yes, and a long way from a railway station, and a very long way from a market.

4205. Have the tenants who were upon it lost their capital?—I think they did, but I may say that people who own their land, and farmed their own land, also lost their capital.

4206. That was the common fate of all?—Yes. We own the Manor of Methwold; the great bulk of it was copyhold.

4207. How did you provide the capital or farming the land?—We had some money put by for a particular purpose in Exchequer bills, and Her Majesty's consent being given we appropriated it for stocking the farms.

4208. Do you put bailiffs on each separate farm?—No; one man who does nothing else looks after the whole, and I go down as often as I can. He has 4,261 acres in hand.

4209. And this year have you done as badly as last year?—This year is bad because we had no hay. I think our valuation will come out very badly.

4210. You have suffered from the drought?—Everything has been burnt up.

4211. Last year did you suffer?—It was very wet in the fen land. It looked remarkably well, but when harvest came everything was drowned with wet.

4212. Then you have had two very disastrous years, very low prices and bad production?—Yes.

4213. Have your losses been heavy both last year and this year?—I have not made the accounts up for this year, but last year it was not anything very bad. After paying all expenses of every kind, paying all drainage rates, and pumping engine expenses, and repairs, and salary, wages, and so forth, we made a loss of about 200*l.*, and paid no rent at all, and no interest upon any of the capital.

4214. Is the average of the farms large or not?—What we have in hand?

4215. Yes?—The fen farms are from 300 up to 700 acres; the other farms are less; the upper farms, 450 to 470. One is 57 acres.

4216. Have you tried to break up the larger farms into smaller ones, or what?—I should be quite prepared to do so if anyone would take them.

4217. Have you had no offers for those farms?—None.

Large and small farms compared.

4218. Looking generally at the property under your management would you say that the depression is more felt by the large farms or by the small ones?—I think mostly by the large ones.

4219. Is that specially in the case of the grass districts?—Yes.

4220. You think small farms have answered better?—Yes, I think so.

Freedom of sale.

4221. Do you insist upon the restrictions or conditions as to the sale of produce and the sale of straw, and so forth?—Since the evidence given in 1880 new forms of lease have been got out, and they are on the table. I think those leases are very fair to the tenants; I do not think anybody could object to them.

4222. Do they give great freedom to the tenants?—Yes.

Difficulty in letting.

4223. With the exception of the land you have spoken of in Norfolk, have you found a difficulty in getting tenants for any vacant farms?—At a reduced rental, no.

4224. When you speak of reduced rental, do you mean at a rent less than the other tenants on the same properties are paying or not?—No; I found it a little difficult——

4225. You mean on account of the reductions which the others have enjoyed?—I may say that we have got an estate near Pontefract where they are mining coal, and I have great difficulty there in finding good tenants, not altogether on account of the difficulty in agriculture, but on account partly of the injury done by the miners.

Sub-division of farms.

4226. Then where opportunities have occurred you subdivided the farms where possible?—Where possible we have.

4227. You get the tenants more easily, and you find it a wise policy to do that?—Yes.

4228. Has that involved expenditure?—Yes, a very considerable expenditure.

4229. But it has been worth while to do that?—There was a difficulty in finding tenants at all, in some cases, where a farm was very large, and in self-defence we were obliged to do it. (*Sir Gardner Engleheart.*) It might be interesting to state that we have nearly 300 tenants, and that half hold under 10 acres each, or not exceeding 10 acres each.

Small holdings.

4230. (*To Mr. Bolden.*) Do those persons live wholly by the land, or have they generally some other occupation?—Small holders generally have some other occupation.

4231. Are many of them labourers, or are they small village tradespeople?—Some labourers and some blacksmiths and joiners, and so on.

4232. Have you had an increased demand for small holdings of that kind?—I do not think it has increased. We have always had a good demand since I have been connected with it.

4233. (*Lord Cobham.*) In what county have you most of them?—In Yorkshire; we have 37 under an acre each.

4234. (*Chairman.*) They are really allotments, or practically so?—No, they have allotments in addition. (*Sir Gardner Engleheart*) Many of them have cottages with good gardens. (*Mr. Bolden.*) I can give you a list (*see* Appendix A., XVI).

4235. Have you many small holdings, not called gardens or allotments, but small farms?—We have a certain number; I suppose you would call between 20 and 50 acres small farms. We have 28 under 20 and 14 between 20 and 50 acres altogether.

4236. Have those tenants felt the depression?—No, they do not complain much.

4237. Have they received the same reductions as the other tenants?—No, I think not.

4238. They have paid the old rent?—We have revalued everything. In 1887 we let at what we thought a fair rent, but many of these have got cottages.

Land in hand.

4239. Then, excepting in Norfolk, you have not any land in hand, and you find practically no real difficulty in getting tenants?—In Yorkshire we have no agricultural lands in hand, but we have a few acres of moorland in hand.

Expenditure on improvements.

4240. What has been your aggregate expenditure for improvements since 1880; have you got that?—On agricultural property we have spent 40,900*l.* in new buildings, fencings, and so forth. On draining we have spent 8,600*l.*; that is in capital improvements. In repairs we spent 18,000*l.* (*see* Appendix A., XIV).

4241. (*Lord Vernon.*) In how many years?—13 years.

4242. (*Chairman.*) What was the 18,000*l.* spent on?—In ordinary repairs.

4243. (*Mr. Little.*) Was that in under-draining, or did it include arterial drainage?—In one case it does.

4244. (*Lord Cobham.*) That would be on the 24,000 acres?—No, on the 17,000 acres, because the moorland must come off.

4245. (*Chairman.*) Have you come to the end of your expenditure on improvements?—Oh, dear no, we never shall.

4246. I think that on some of this land, in consequence of the falling in of beneficial leases, the expenditure was very heavy?—So it is.

4247. And you have not come to the end of it?—No.

4248. Are you well supplied with cottages?—Many of the estates are not.

4249. And more expenditure would be needed for those?—I think so.

4250. Is there any other point you desire to bring before the Commission?—No, I do not know that there is. I have got a number of papers here in case you wish to ask questions.

4251. (*To Sir Gardner Engleheart.*) I have put to you all the matters referred to in this paper. Is there anything else you wish to lay before the Commission?—No, I think not.

4252. (*Mr. Channing.*) Are these tabulated statements to be put in?—We have given them in every conceivable form which we thought might possibly be useful.

Land in hand.

4253. (*Chairman to Mr. Bolden.*) Have you any expectation of being able to let the land in Norfolk or not?—One lives in hopes, but my hope is very small.

4254. You will be compelled to go on farming for some time to come?—I see nothing for it but to farm on. We cannot let it go back to a state of nature.

4255. Is not there an advantage in farming on such a large scale of 4,000 acres. Have you derived any advantage in carrying on the operation on such a large scale as compared with farming upon a smaller scale?—No.

4256. (*To Sir Gardner Engleheart.*) You have got 4,000 acres in hand?—We thought that the Queen should set an example to the neighbourhood and should not allow her property to go back into prairie, if it were possible that we could rescue it. And, therefore, that induced us on *quasi* public grounds to lay out more money than an individual landowner would be disposed to.

4257. There might be a temptation to let it go into prairie land?—Or shooting. (*Mr. Bolden.*) It would be very much cheaper to have had it swamped.

4258. (*Lord Cobham.*) If you got 20*s.* an acre, would it not pay?—Yes.

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4259. (*Lord Vernon.*) It was originally reclaimed land; have you pumped it?—Yes.

4260. (*Lord Cobham.*) When you sell land do you sell it in the ordinary way by public auction?—No.

Sale of land.

4261. How?—We never sell it unless we get a good price for it. We sell it privately. (*Sir Gardner Engleheart.*) We are not sellers of land.

4262. You do not sell to tenants?—We have concentrated to some extent. The policy of the Duchy has been to sell outlying fragmentary portions as it were.

4263. Otherwise you do not sell?—No. (*Mr. Bolden.*) We have sold 1,799 acres.

4264. (*Mr. Channing.*) And part of this is in the neighbourhood of growing towns?—Yes.

Shooting rights.

4265. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you find that rabbits increase when the farmers get the shooting?—They have allowed them to increase very much to the injury of the farm in some cases.

4266. And when the farms are let to shooting tenants you do not find the same results?—No.

Successful tenants.

4267. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) I think upon the estates where the rents are very high the tenants have done well as a rule—in Lancashire, Staffordshire, and Lincolnshire?—I have had no complaints, and they are content.

4268. What is the reason of that? Is there any special culture, or what is it that makes them do better than other tenants?—The Lancashire tenants are in the neighbourhood of big towns; they have a good market for their milk, and they make cheese.

4269. That would account for that result?—I think so. Staffordshire is a milk country. I think milk has done pretty well for them. In Lincolnshire we have an exceptionally good tenant; a man of very large capital, who has done very well. I think, generally, a man of great energy.

4270. So that there are exceptional circumstances upon all those estates?—I think there are.

Barley growing in Norfolk.

4271. May I ask further whether in Norfolk you grow barley at all?—Yes, but we cannot grow good barley.

4272. Not of good quality?—No.

Causes of depression.

4273. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Have the management of the Duchy farms any opinion—collectively I mean—upon the main question of the reason of the depression? Have they had that matter under consideration?—There can be no doubt that the very low prices of produce and the bad seasons we have had are the principal causes of the depression.

Protection.

4274. Have they at the same time then considered in any way how the present depression can be remedied or lessened?—Of course we have all thought of what might be done, but as to what is likely to be done, that is a very different thing.

4275. What do you think can be done?—Of course, if you went in for Protection we should raise the prices, but it is not in the least likely that we should have it.

Rates.

4276. Is that the whole remedy?—I think that the whole matter of rates wants revising. The burdens on the land are, in my opinion, too high.

Estate in Lincolnshire.

4277. (*Mr. Little.*) I understood that the Lincolnshire Estate was chiefly fen land?—That is so.

4278. There you have little sign of depression; that is to say, a moderate reduction of rent has sufficed to keep on the farmers?—Yes.

4279. That is very good fen land, is it not?—It is.

Freedom of sale.

4280. Do you allow the tenants to sell mangolds and other roots?—We put clauses into our leases saying that they shall not sell, but they have only to apply if they wish to do it, and we do not raise any objection in the case of a good tenant.

4281. Do they apply each year, or do they assume until they are pulled up that they may do it?—I am continually going about, and as long as I see a farmer farming tolerably I do not interfere.

4282. They are able to grow great crops of mangolds and other roots in East Lincolnshire?—Yes.

4283. It is particularly good fen land?—Yes.

Estate in Norfolk.

4284. Then the land in Norfolk, which is entirely of a different and very inferior character, is the estate which is in hand; that is the Methwold estate?—Yes.

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4285. That is a very inferior property. Did I understand that part of the high land in Methwold was in hand?—Yes.

4286. That is thin land on the chalk?—Yes.

4287. And both descriptions of land are those where the produce in the best of seasons is only comparatively small?—That is so.

Expenditure on en land.

4288. Your fen estate has been the subject of enormous expenditure in the last 40 or 50 years?—Yes.

4289. It was rough grass and then an engine was erected for drainage, and it was turned into arable land some time in the present century?—That I could not answer. Some of it probably was so.

Farm buildings.

4290. And buildings were erected and farmhouses?—Yes.

4291. And those farmhouses are at the present time either occupied by labourers or empty?—They are all occupied.

4292. By labourers?—Yes; foremen.

4293. You have attempted to clay the land?—Yes.

4294. I believe there is no clay under the land, but you have to cart it?—There is clay under part of it close to the surface.

4295. But for a considerable portion there is no clay?—That is so.

4296. Did you attempt to improve it by carrying clay on to it?—We did.

4297. You have also had great improvements made in arterial drainage, or attempted it at any rate?—That is so.

4298. You have done a great deal in the way of roads?—I believe so.

4299. And otherwise you have spent large sums on improvements?—Yes.

4300. And all this expenditure of capital is, as it were, sunk?—Yes.

4301. I suppose that if the fen land on that estate were put into the market to-day it would not realise anything like what has been spent on it in improvements during the last 20 years?—No.

4302. And not one-fourth of what has been spent in the present century?—I think you are possibly right.

Reduction in rents.

4303. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Have you any case in which there has been any reduction in rent owing to an increase of rates?—In making the valuation in 1877 we certainly took into consideration the amount of rates that the land paid. If the rates had gone up in the last year we should have reduced the rent accordingly.

4304. Did you find any case in which they had gone up considerably?—No, I think not.

4305. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Upon those estates that you have given us figures about, the reduction seems to me to be about 20 to 25 per cent.?—I should think so, probably.

4306. Does your experience go back prior to 20 years ago?—No; my experience is only since 1886.

4307. You could not say whether rents had been increased or decreased during the 10 years prior to 1873?—I could not answer that.

4308. (*Captain Thomas.*) Are your tenants satisfied with the reductions made?—As a whole, I think, yes.

4309. Have there been no complaints?—I think, on the whole, the Duchy tenants are satisfied with their landlord.

4310. Have you any knowledge of the neighbouring farms that belong to other owners?—Yes.

4311. How do your rents compare with those?—They are about the same, not above other people.

4312. Have they made the same reductions?—I could not answer that.

Conditions in the Duchy leases.

4313. (*Mr. Channing.*) I wish to ask one or two questions as to those leases; in the first place, I see you adopt the plan of a schedule as to the condition of each of the fields (*lease forms put in*)?—Yes.

4314. Do you adopt any plan of inventoring in any way the condition of the buildings and fences, or anything of the kind, or is that included in this schedule?—No, nothing more than you see there in the schedule.

4315. In the case of the buildings which the tenants are required to repair you do not schedule their condition in any way on entering?—No.

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4316. I want to ask you how the 20th section of the lease is to be interpreted?—Which one have you got, Lady Day or Michaelmas?

4317. A Michaelmas lease?—There is one for entry at Michaelmas and the other at Lady Day.

4318. This is that in respect to the defects of cultivation and wants of repair for which the lessee is liable, notice is to be given, as I understand, three months before the date of quitting?—Yes.

4319. Does that mean that you give up the right of further counter claims under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—No.

4320. It does not?—No.

4321. It is only with regard to the defects of cultivation and wants of repair, which are specifically provided for in the covenants?—That clause is "During "the lease to make good all such defects of cultivation "and wants of repair as the lessee is liable to make "good, and as shall be set forth in a specification furnished by the lessor not less than three calendar "months previously." That is not to be produced on going out, but at any time during the lease.

4322. I understood it to apply to the end of the time. Then you reserve the general right of the landlord to counter claim in the usual way under the sixth section of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

4323. I see that the freedom of cultivation, or rather the sale of produce, is linked to selling off half the hay or the wheat straw?—Yes.

4324. Do you think, considering the manurial value of straw now, and the commercial value of straw, that it is desirable to have those restrictions?—I think it is better to put it into the lease; if the tenant was selling more and farming well we would never object to it.

4325. Under the conditions of this year you perhaps might relax that?—Undoubtedly. (*Sir Gardner Engleheart.*) Those leases were drafted in 1886, and we had then the advantage of having Mr. Chaplin for our Chancellor, and it was under his superintendence that these leases assumed the form in which you now see them.

4326. (*To Mr. Bolden.*) I see further you substitute "fair and reasonable compensation" under the fifth section of the Agricultural Holdidgs Act for the compensation under that Act?—No, that is in addition to the Agricultural Holdings Act, inasmuch as under the Agricultural Holdings Act the man has to give notice two months before the expiry of the lease; but if he did not choose to give notice we should not take advantage of the lapse; we should refer it to arbitration if he wished.

4327. In the case of reference with regard to compensation, I understand that you substitute the President of the Surveyors' Institute for the Land Commission?—Yes.

4328. Why do you think that course more desirable?—I must ask you to ask Mr. Chaplin that. (*Sir Gardner Engleheart.*) We thought it more convenient on the whole, that clause not being in pursuance of the Act, that we should draft it in the way we have done. We thought it more convenient to ask the President of the Surveyors' Institute to name an arbitrator or umpire.

4329. Is that view based at all on an opinion that it is desirable that all these references should be conducted by specially skilled persons and not by the ordinary type of valuer that might be appointed by the County Court?—I do not know whether that was the actuating motive, but it was well considered at the time, and that was the decision that we arrived at.

4330 (*To Mr. Bolden.*) You would prefer the Surveyors' Institute as a very responsible corporation to the County Court for the selection of an arbitrator in these cases?—I should. (*Sir Gardner Engleheart.*) We consider that it would be more easily worked.

Estate in Staffordshire.

4331. (*Lord Vernon to Mr. Bolden.*) Would you tell me if the holdings in Staffordshire on your property remain pretty much the same in size and acreage?—Yes, I think there is no alteration.

4332. With reference to those that are small, do you find that they pay a better rent than the big ones in the dairy districts?—Yes, a little.

4333. Do you have many applications for the farms to be divided up at all, that is, to be lessened?—No.

4334. Would you tell me one other thing: have you found the Agricultural Holdings Act perfectly satisfactory in the cases that you have had to deal with?—We have had very few cases under it, only two cases.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

4335. Do you think yourself, from what you hear from the farmers, that it would be an advantage to simplify it at all?—Yes.

4336. You do?—Yes.

4337. (*Chairman.*) Do you frequently visit the Staffordshire, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, and Lancashire estates?—Constantly.

Tenants' capital.

4338. And you say the tenants have capital sufficient to cultivate the land?—Yes, as a rule.

4339. They still retain their capital in spite of the bad times?—There are exceptions.

4340. But taking it generally, should you say that they have capital enough to do justice to the land?—Yes.

4341. There is every indication of it?—I believe so; there are, of course, exceptions.

Labourers' cottages.

4342. (*To Sir Gardner Engleheart.*) I am taking a general view of these properties. I observe in 1880, in answer to Question 1101, put to you by Sir William Stephenson, you said: "I am bound to say that the "Duchy estates are very badly supplied with cottages, "and we are gradually seeking to improve that state of "things, and we have been building cottages lately, "and for those we charge 4 per cent., and in one instance 3¼ per cent." Has that been considered since then?—Yes, to some extent. We have lately built some cottages in Norfolk for one of the few farmers that remain as lessees, a man named Barker; we have built three cottages, I think.

4343. (*To Mr. Bolden.*) Taking a general view of the property what have you done?—Cottages have been built.

4344. Is there still a deficiency in that respect?—Yes.

4345. And more expenditure needed?—Yes.

4346. (*To Sir Gardner Engleheart.*) Have you found in consequence of the other demands upon you for capital expenditure that you have been unable to do as much as you wished in respect to the building of cottages during the last 12 years?—It is rather difficult to say that it is in consequence of other demands.

4347. You stated then that you were bound to say that they were badly supplied with cottages?—We have been building cottages, but not so fast as we might or ought to have done; we have improved the existing cottages very much.

Causes of the failure of tenants.

4348. I observe that speaking of the several estates in 1880 you attributed the failure of the tenants, so far as that had existed at that time to the want of energy on the part of the tenants?—Yes, I remember giving that answer.

4349. Has that been the cause of the subsequent failures or not in Norfolk?—We have gradually taken nearly the whole of Norfolk into our hands.

4350. I was pointing out that in 1880 you attributed the failures which had then taken place to the want of energy of the tenants?—I think that the farmers have not done what they perhaps might have done in all ways. I think they are not quite as thrifty, and their families are not quite as energetic as they might be.

4351. In that district?—You can hardly say in that district particularly, because we have taken nearly the whole of the district into our own hands.

4352. Would you attribute the failure on that estate compared with the others to that cause, or to the very serious depression of agriculture?—It is one of the minor causes. Of course, the weather is a far greater factor in the problem than the want of energy in the farmers.

Tithes.

4353. Since the Tithe Act have you paid the tithes on the property?—We have got very little tithe property; we are now taking the tithe into our own payment. I think that we have got a return. (*Mr. Bolden.*) All the tithe payable is 647*l.*—that is gross.

4354. The greater part of the property has been enclosed in recent years, and is not subject to tithes?—Yes; allotments are given in lieu of tithes, and extinguish them.

4355. Then it is a very unimportant question?—The total sum is 647*l.*, and of that the tenants pay 263*l.* The whole thing is very small.

4356. You have not recovered the whole of it from the tenants?—Some of it is on lease yet.

Expenditure on improvements.

4357. (*Lord Vernon to Mr. Bolden.*) Your own expenditure on new buildings, drainage, and repairs is not very large on the gross receipts on your property, is it?—Something under 4,000*l.* a year for 14 years.

4358. 4,000*l.* a year out of 47,000*l.*?—On capital improvements.

4359. 4,000*l.* a year at least I make out on new buildings, drainage, and repairs?—Yes.

4360. About 4,000*l.* a year you have spent?—Not including repairs, it is more if you include repairs.

4361. The figures I have got come to a little more than 4,000*l.* a year on everything. That is only 10 per cent. on repairs, capital expenditure, and drainage?—But you must bear in mind that at that time and for some time afterwards, roughly speaking, nearly half the property was in beneficial holdings. Upon that, of course, we should not make any outlay. (*Mr. Bolden.*) Allow me to quote the figures. If you look at the tabular statement you will see our great expenditure has been made since 1887 (*see* Appendix A., XIV). Up to that time between 1880 and 1887 the expenditure was trifling.

4362. But even in the last year you only spent under 7,000*l.* on a total gross of 47,000*l.*?—That is true.

4363. Your expenditure is very small compared with that of the average English landlords, I imagine?—Would you excuse me, that 47,000*l.* is the total sum that we get for agricultural and residental property, beneficial leases, and cottages. (*Sir Gardner Engleheart.*) You are taking the house property as well, you see.

4364. (*Lord Cobham to Mr. Bolden.*) The strict agricultural rent is 19,800*l.*?—That is about it. It is on an income of under 20,000*l.*

4365. (*Mr. Channing.*) And these are agricultural repairs?—Yes.

4366. (*Lord Vernon to Sir Gardner Engleheart.*) I wanted a sort of idea of what the average per-centage per annum upon the agricultural land is?—It is nearly 4,000*l.* a year on improvements without counting repairs. (*Mr. Bolden.*) But we have spent a great deal more than that on the whole estate. The figures I have quoted refer only to the agricultural land.

The witnesses withdrew.

LORD WANTAGE called and examined.

4367. (*Chairman.*) You are owner of very considerable estates in Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, and Berkshire?—Yes.

4368. And you have been kind enough to lay before me a table showing in respect of the Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire estates the gross rent and the net income of the estates for the last 20 years?—Yes, I have done so.

4369. May I ask what the total acreage of the estates is now?—I do not know that I can give the details of my statement. What I was proposing to do to-day was to touch more upon my Berkshire property, leaving that tabular statement to speak for itself so far as you find it on that paper. There are some very complicated figures in it, which perhaps you will excuse me going into to-day.

4370. You would confine your evidence to the Berkshire property?—Yes, to the Berkshire property.

Acreage of Berkshire estate.

4371. What is the acreage of your Berkshire property?—The acreage that I have under cultivation myself, which I perhaps would speak about more generally, is 4,427 acres.

4372. That you have in hand?—Yes.

4373. And how much have you got under tenancy?—I must have, taking it all round, counting in down land, which is extensive, 18,000 acres of land in Berkshire.

4374. Besides the 4,000?—Including the 4,000.

Acreage in hand.

4375. And you have taken that 4,427 acres in hand at various times during the last 20 years?—Yes, I have taken it about that; I should say somewhere about that period.

4376. Have you taken that large portion in hand in consequence of the tenants leaving?—In point of fact I do not think I have ever dispossessed a tenant. In every case it has been a tenant who has for purposes of his own, generally on account of depression, thrown up his farm; and in some cases the farms have been thrown on my hands on account of death, and I have taken them bit by bit in that way.

4377. Does it mostly lie in a ring fence?—Yes; the 4,427 acres which I am now speaking of lie entirely in two parishes altogether, I may say very well within a ring fence.

4378. How long have you had the greater portion of that in hand, for some years, I suppose?—Yes, I have had it some years, but I have had additions made to it within the last four years. From time to time I have had a new farm, or new areas thrown in up to within the last three years.

Result of farming land in hand.

Profits.

4379. And what has been your experience of farming on that largish property?—My experience is very much like that of everybody else: it is, I will not say disastrous altogether, because on my farm I have great advantages. The land lies very conveniently, there is a railway at one end; there are roads traversing it from end to end; there is a slice of down land, which is very convenient for young cattle and sheep; and in the centre there is good barley and wheat land; and at the lower end, which is next the railway, there is very good pasture, I suppose as good as any that can be met with. There has been a considerable amount of capital laid out upon it in improving the buildings and making the roads. I should say that I have treated myself with liberality, by lowering my rents considerably, I charge myself with a moderate rate of interest, and under the circumstances as I will show (if you ask for those accounts) that it has resulted in a profit over the whole area averaging from about 800*l.* to 1,000*l.*

4380. That is to say, after paying all expenses, paying reduced rent, which I suppose you have calculated according to other reductions?—Yes.

4381. And somewhat low interest upon your outlay? Yes.

4382. (*Lord Cobham.*) Is that the average profit per annum since you took the farms in hand?—Yes, taking six years. I took that period as convenient.

4383. (*Chairman.*) An average profit of 800*l.* a year?—800*l.* to 1,000*l.* a year.

4384. And what rate of interest do you charge yourself with?—I charge myself with 5 per cent. interest.

Rent of land in hand.

4385. And what rent do you charge yourself with?—I charge myself a little under 1*l.* an acre.

4386. A little under 1*l.* an acre?—Rather less.

4387. What reduction have you given yourself for the purpose of your accounts, that would be a fair indication of what you consider the fall in rents in your district has been?—I have reduced myself certainly 40 per cent.

4388. Then the rent at one time when you began this system was considerably over 30*s.* per acre?—Yes.

4389. Now before we go further with regard to your farm experience, I think it will be well to enter upon the other part of the property which is let to the tenants?—Yes.

Condition of tenants.

4390. What has been your experience on your Berkshire property in that respect?—My experience has been discouraging. Most of the farms, as gentlemen know very well, in that district, are large, and the tenants there are men of capital, or rather were men of capital; and I think owners, whose property lies in such land as that have been hit harder than others, and I may say that my reductions have been over 50 per cent.; this year I have had farms, or rather tenants offering to stay on at a rent which is, in my opinion, not adequate, I mean offering to stay at a rent reduced from 800*l.* a year to 300*l.* a year.

Commencement of the depression, 1879.

4391. When did the depression begin in your district?—I think it began during the bad seasons towards the eighties; the price of wheat in 1875 was 63*s*. per quarter for good wheat, and barley was then 50*s*. per quarter.

4392. And then 1879 was a very disastrous year in point of produce, coupled with lower prices, I think?—Both lower prices and bad seasons.

4393. From that period dates the commencement of the bad seasons, I suppose?—Yes, I think you might fairly say that was the beginning of the bad times.

The season of 1887.

4394. After that was there any period of rather better times, or not?—Well, there was a very good year that I daresay you remember, the Jubilee year, that was within recent times, I think, in 1887, which was a very favourable year for stock growers and sheep owners and corn growers. It was a very fine season, and we had most exceptional rains, which fell early in June, and carried us through an otherwise dry, fine, warm year, and that year was known in my part of the world as a very productive year.

4395. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Did not you mean to say "corn" growers in the Jubilee year?—Yes, it was a good year for corn growers.

4396. But you said "stock" growers?—Both; the stock sold well, it was a good grass year, and my accounts show on that year that the sale of stock was advantageous.

The seasons of 1892-3.

4397. (*Chairman.*) Then last year and the present year have been extremely bad?—This year is a very bad year.

4398. What was last year?—A very bad year.

4399. You have had two successive bad years?—Yes; two bad years, owing to the seasons, I think owing to the seasons and the prices, although, of course, this year is not quite completed yet, since the months of September, October, and November, the season has been better; but it was bad; there were no turnips at one time; the turnips have grown better since, and as to the hay, we hardly grew any at all.

Reductions of rent.

4400. When did your reductions of rent begin?—I should think when the seasons began to get bad, they were in 1878 and 1879, that was the time that the rents began to tumble down.

4401. And they have been tumbling down ever since?—Progressively tumbling down to this year, which has been the worst year that we have had, as far as my experience goes.

4402. What has been the average reduction of rents upon your estate?—I should say from 40 to 50 per cent.; nearer 50 than 40 per cent. I am talking of those big sheep farms, which have been so disastrously hit. I am not talking of small farms which I think have been able to stand the brunt better.

4403. You speak of sheep farms, including a large amount of down?—Yes, of down and of corn land.

4404. And it is in respect of those that the main reductions have been experienced?—Yes.

Expenditure on improvements.

4405. Have you, besides the reductions of rent been able to make a large outlay in improvements on that estate?—Yes; I have gone on doing more than landlords used to do. I have done more than they used to do in the bad times, and than I did in the times that were prosperous. One great object has been to keep the tenants on their legs by giving them anything that they asked for in the way of reasonable demands.

Reductions in rent.

4406. Then besides the permanent reductions, I suppose there have been temporary abatements?—I have made temporary reductions from time to time, but those reductions are now permanent. I have not done as some persons have done by keeping the old rent on, but I have made permanent reductions and further temporary reductions on the permanent ones.

4407. The permanent reductions have followed very slowly upon the temporary ones?—Yes; precisely.

4408. Of course, in some cases, temporary reductions have been kept on for some years?—Yes; and at last confirmed.

4409. You have made the reductions permanent very quickly?—Yes; I thought of, and the tenants generally urged, that being done on account of getting a better position on the rate book.

Large and small farms compared.

4410. You said just now that the large farms have suffered very much more severely than the smaller ones?—Yes; that is my experience.

4411. Have you found an increasing demand for small farms of 50 and 100 acres?—Yes; I find that small farms of the size you mention are readily taken up.

4412. Is that from the larger tenants falling back into smaller farms, or fresh tenants coming in?—I have not noticed that the larger tenants have fallen back to smaller farms.

4413. But have you not had a class of small farmers taking smaller farms?—I think that it is the man who is ready to work himself and to bring his sons and his nephews in, in fact a man almost of the labouring class that comes in now.

4414. He does not suffer from the labour difficulty?—He is not hit by the heavy labour bill.

Competition for small farms.

4415. Have you found that men of that type have been more willing to pay rents than the larger class?—I think the small men of that sort are better and more punctual. I had occasion the other day to let a small farm of that size, and my agent told me that he had eight or ten competitors for it. That was a farm of 120 or 130 acres.

4416. What was the rent of that?—It was a farm which was let upon the reduction. I should say probably 25*s*. per acre, or something of that sort.

4417. Was it a fair rent?—A fair rent. I should perhaps say 22*s*.

4418. And for that farm you had a dozen competitors?—Yes; eight or ten.

4419. Were they men with sufficient capital?—They were men who were ready to take the farm. They must have had some capital, but they belonged to the working class of tenant.

4420. (*Mr. Everett.*) How large a farm was that?—About 120 acres.

Sub-division of farms.

4421. (*Chairman.*) Have you spent any money in sub-dividing the large farms for the purpose of inducing the small tenants to come in?—Yes, I have done that to a certain extent, in some cases not very much because some of the farms that I have been associated with have been originally small farms.

Expenditure on buildings.

4422. Where they have been consolidated, the first process is now taking place?—Yes, it is now going back again. There must be money spent upon it. It cannot be done without spending money. My experience is that small farmers are less exacting than the large ones. They do not want such costly buildings. I might be allowed to say that landlords have spent too much upon buildings. I think, as has been proved, there has been too large an outlay upon buildings. Less solid buildings would have answered the purpose as well as some of these very much more expensive buildings.

4423. In converting the large farms into small ones has there been a sacrifice of capital in that respect, that the large farms were provided with unnecessarily large buildings, which were not available for the small farms?—Yes, on some of those big buildings the money spent upon them has been proved to be too much. The small tenants do not want those buildings.

4424. Looking at the districts around your property, do you say that landlords have been unable to break up large farms into small ones owing to the want of large means to effect any operations of that kind?—I think landlords can do nothing in many cases, their means are crippled, and the small outlay necessary is almost too much for them to make such moderate changes as I spoke of.

4425. You think there has been great difficulty in that respect in turning the land to the best advantage owing to want of capital on the part of the landlords?—I would generally say that the landlords have been unable to make any further outlay upon their land, and they are rather indisposed to do much more. My clerk of the works says that a wooden building with oak posts, and wood treated with carbolineum, put upon a brick foundation, and with a corrugated iron roof, can be put up for about 20*l*. a bay: that would be 80*l*. for four bays; contrasting that with brick walls, and timbers, slate roof, the same size building would come to 80*l*. a bay, or 300*l*. for the total outlay.

4425*a*. (*Lord Cobham.*) There would be some difference in the cost of maintenance?—Yes, especially the corrugated iron. The question is whether the difference between 80*l*. and 300*l*. would not be sufficient to warrant the lower outlay.

4426. (*Lord Vernon.*) Is not 300*l.* rather expensive for that; had you your bricks handy?—I think it is high; Landlords have had a tendency to do the work very well, very solidly.

Loans for carrying out improvements.

4427. (*Chairman.*) Do you consider that it would be expedient that the State should advance money by way of loan to landlords with a view of facilitating improvements, and the sub-division of farms?—I should like to see it. I have not, of course, thought out a scheme, but I sent my agent round only yesterday, to ascertain what possibility there was of obtaining money for the purpose, and he reports to me that there are three companies now in existence for the special purpose of lending money for improving estates. There is the Land Improvement Company in Great George Street; the Land Loan Enfranchisement Company, and the General Land Drainage and Improvement Company. These companies lend money upon the security of the land at 4 per cent. interest, repayable in 25 years, and for any sum lent over 500*l.*, the rentcharge is 6*l.* 7*s.* 4*d.* per annum. In the case of all the companies there is in addition a commission of 5 per cent. upon the amount expended, and also in one case the usual surveyor's charges for the preparation of plans, and the superintendence of the works, but the cost generally speaking, of those companies comes to 6 and 7 per cent. if you borrow money, repaying it at the end of 25 years.

4428. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Does that include the sinking fund?—It includes the sinking fund, 4 per cent. is on the money borrowed, and the remainder goes towards the sinking fund. Then I believe in the year 1847 a sum of four millions was voted for drainage of land, which was lent at 4 per cent. interest repayable in 22 years at 6*l.* 10*s.* a year; but none of this money is now available.

4429. (*Chairman.*) And I presume you would consider, having regard to the precedents under which money is lent to Irish landlords and Irish tenants that something considerably less than 4 per cent. should now be charged?—Decidedly.

4430. By spreading the repayment over a somewhat longer period, the charge to the owners would be considerably reduced?—It would be considerably reduced. I think it would be a very great convenience if it could be done.

4431. And in your district the landowners would avail themselves of it, you think?—I believe so.

Small holdings.

4432. I think before Mr. Chamberlain's Committee on Small Holdings, three or four years ago, you gave evidence as to the advantage of small holdings?—Yes, I did.

4433. And I think you expressed an opinion that it would be very desirable to encourage small holdings as far as possible?—That was my opinion then, and I am quite of that opinion now.

Small Farms' Company.

4434. Have you had any experience in the interval on the subject?—I have been associated with a company for providing small farms in which the tenants have been hit just the same as the other tenants, but they are all on their legs and paying their rents, and declaring themselves fairly satisfied.

4435. That company, I believe, has been formed for the purpose of purchasing estates and letting them out in small holdings?—Yes.

4436. And selling them to the holders when possible, and spreading the purchase money over a term of years?—Yes.

4437. These operations have not been extensive in the selling of those farms, have they?—No, they have not.

4438. There are very few cases in which the persons who have become tenants of the holdings have done so upon the understanding that they are ultimately to be purchasers, I understand?—Very few.

4439. Mainly they have been small tenants?—The fact is that their position is so good as tenants that they have no wish to be turned into landlords. But there are some who have purchased portions of the land. What they like to do is to buy an acre or two acres on which to put their buildings and their house, and rent the rest. That is their inclination, and that anchors them to the land, and also makes it difficult for anybody else to take the land away from them.

4440. Of course, practically, the operation is that of a company becoming a landlord of a considerable number of small holdings?—Yes.

4441. Has it been advantageous to the company?—It has paid very little per-centage. I do not know what. I think it is 3 per cent. It has not been advantageous to the shareholders.

4442. It has not been advantageous to the shareholders?—I am afraid not.

4443. I think, if I am right, you yourself contributed largely by giving them an estate?—I started them with a wretched property; it was abandoned by everybody, nobody would touch it, it was a sort of sheep farm and over-sheeped, and that was what they began with; but they have turned this farm, which as I tell you was a very poor one, into much more fertile land than it was before.

4444. Are many of the tenants on those properties which have been bought by this company living wholly by the land, or are they generally people with other occupations?—They have occasionally something else to do; those who have done best.

4445. What are the sizes of those farms?—They run from about two acres to 30 acres; some of them are blacksmiths and village tradesmen of different sorts; those men find it very convenient.

4446. They find it a great convenience?—Very convenient.

4447. But there are not many of them who could live wholly by the land?—I think that they chiefly live by the land, but they throw in some extra assistance, and in some cases they themselves work; they go out and work on the adjoining farms, or on the roads.

4448. Those are cases of agricultural labourers, or almost in the position of agricultural labourers?—Yes.

4449. Who take small holdings, and who supplement their profits from that by working as labourers?—Yes; when they have an opportunity.

4450. Has your experience of the company led you to believe that their example might be followed by landowners?—It is better not to have too many of these small holdings together. Landlords might with advantage have a certain number of them on their estates.

4451. Of course the company is formed for the purpose of letting the whole estate in this way?—Yes.

4452. And in that way they have got a community of small holdings together?—Yes.

Experience of small holdings.

4453. But on the whole it hardly answers?—I do not think it does as a financial investment; but in a village there is always room for a very fair proportion of men, who would be very glad to take a little farm of moderate size.

4454. Have you endeavoured to encourage a class of that sort on your own property?—Very much.

4455. Have you succeeded in doing so?—Yes; I have.

4456. You have increased the number?—I have increased the number living in villages who are taking land, some grass, if possible, they always are most grateful for grass lands.

4457. Do they pay a fair average agricultural rent?—They pay rent very readily.

4458. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do they reside on the farm?—They reside on the farm.

4459. In all cases?—Yes.

4460. (*Chairman.*) What tenure do you give them?—The usual tenure of other tenants; I give no other.

4461. A yearly tenancy?—Yes. They have never asked for anything more.

4462. I presume they expect to be treated in a generous way?—They like an honourable understanding better than a lease infinitely.

4463. What is the honourable understanding?—As long as they pay the rent they will never be disturbed; and even if they fall into arrears they will not usually be disturbed.

4464. And they continue those rents, and it is almost equivalent to a lease?—As good and better, I should say. But there is great difficulty, as you will perceive, in the process of letting land in small quantities in villages. The small holders generally want the best

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bits of land, and you have to take it away from the large tenant farmer, who does not like giving up the best land on his farm. The landlord also often fails to see why land should be taken from a large tenant to be given to a small tenant, more especially as the latter does not usually recognise the fact that land is of value in proportion to its proximity to the village, and must therefore be paid for proportionately. The process is at best a slow one, and can only be done by degrees, and it will often take two years. I am now in process of doing it. I am persuading the tenant to give up some land, and the tenant says, You must give me the usual notice, and it, practically, is two years. It takes time before you can accommodate those little people, and they are very anxious that it should be done directly, and they do not perceive that small holders as well as allotment holders must be prepared to pay enhanced prices for accommodation land.

Small Farms' Company.

4465. In the case of the company that you spoke of does the company provide money for the improvements and buildings or is it done by the small tenant?—No, the company has done what is needed.

4466. The outlay must be considerable?—Yes, it is.

4467. And such as landlords generally would be hardly able to undertake?—Yes, I think so.

4468. If it is done on any scale?—It costs money decidedly.

4469. I presume doing it in the way you suggest on your property by degrees many small holders would live in the village in houses already built?—Very often, and perhaps in houses which belong to them, or are hired independent of the land.

4470. Therefore, when undertaken in this kind of tentative way it may not involve much expenditure on the part of the landlord?—I think not, and the less expenditure the better.

4471. But if done on the scale that has been attempted by this company it would involve a large outlay?—It would cost money. I do not know whether it would be a large outlay, because, as I say, those men are easily satisfied. They do not want much, and a wooden shed seems to them a sort of act of Providence; if you give them a shed they very often will do something to keep it in order themselves.

Land in hand in the district.

4472. Has there been much land taken in hand in your district by the landowners?—Yes; my neighbours have been compelled to take land very widely in hand, as I have done myself. My adjoining neighbour, who is the member for Berkshire, has had farm after farm thrown on his hands.

4473. Does he farm the land himself, or has he bailiffs?—He farms it himself with bailiffs.

Farm management.

4474. Have many of the tenants become bailiffs?—Yes, I think so, it has been the practice to put the tenant in as bailiff, and I think it a very good plan too if he is a man of capacity.

4475. How do you manage your own considerable farm of over 4,000 acres; have you several bailiffs?—No, only one bailiff, who superintends the whole thing, to whom I give an adequate salary; he buys everything and sells everything, and under him there are only foremen, who have nothing to do with the management of the farm, but only work with the other men. They are labourers with a small addition, perhaps 2*s.* above the others, and they act as foremen.

4476. Do you think that the favourable results of your experience are due to the fact of so large an amount of land being in one hand, I mean that it is conducted on so large a scale?—I should say that on the whole it is not a misfortune to the country to have land so farmed. I think it is an advantage to have areas of land farmed by landowners. I think in the first place that you get a superior sort of agriculturist to manage the land. A better man in knowledge and in training and in capacity than the neighbouring farmer; but then you must pay your manager adequately, and you must make his position a good one. Many gentlemen who farm their own land have put men in as bailiffs on salaries quite inadequate. You do not get the best man, and his pay is not much better than a second-class clerk, and his position is not a particularly good one. If you are farming a large tract of land, you can afford to get a man of superior quality, and he comes in with practical knowledge, and also with theoretical knowledge, which is essential, and that man sets an example, perhaps, to the whole country round, and farmers see the work much better done on a gentleman's farm than in their own places, and the labourers also are not slow to find it out.

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Large and small farms compared.

4477. Would you say that your success, so far as it has been so, has been due to farming on so great a scale; for 4,000 acres is a considerable area?—I think so, in farming on a large scale there is a great economy; you grow a better sample of corn on a large field than in a little one; you get a higher price in the market for it; there is less tail; the quality is better; and you can use machinery more advantageously on a large farm than on a little one, and you can diminish the number of horses and the number of labourers. In fact, it is more economically worked in every way. I employ 60 horses on my farm, while my predecessors on the same area employed 90.

4478. You spoke of there being less difficulty in letting small farms than in the case of large farms?—Yes.

4479. Is that because would-be tenants have not sufficient capital?—There are no candidates for large farms.

4480. It is for want of capital, then, that you have not the candidates for the large farms?—It is want of capital.

Co-operative farming.

4481. Would you say that with sufficient capital the tenants could make the land pay?—I think so. It is more capital that is needed. I would say they might combine together.

4482. You think they might combine together?—Yes, they might put their capital together to take a large area. I am told that some of the banks now are running farms with their own capital, and putting in a tenant of exceptional ability, and they are farming tracts of land such as I spoke of myself. Large farms, which are beyond the means of one man, might be farmed with company money.

4483. In other words they form a combination?—Yes, a combination, something of that sort.

4484. And you think we may look forward to some combinations of that kind, in the way of easing the difficulty?—I think that is as good a remedy as anybody can suggest. Nobody can lay down a remedy as far as I can see; but under the circumstances it does appear to me that something of the sort offers the best chance, where you have farming by means of a syndicate in fact.

4485. Then it would rather tend to this, that we may look forward to very large and very small farms?—Yes.

4486. And that the medium sized farms would be rather reduced in number, being broken up into small holdings?—There is a saying which is very true. It is, that the man of capital, and the man of labour, are the only two people who are going to make farming answer.

Yearly agreements.

4487. Is your Berkshire estate, or any part of it let on lease, or do the tenants hold it by the year?—By the year. I do not think I have any leases at all.

4488. The tenants will not take leases?—No, they do not want them; they would rather not have them.

4489. That is mainly on the ground of the uncertainty as to the future?—That is so.

Profit-sharing with labourers.

4490. In the case of the land you have got in hand, I think you have tried a system of profit sharing with your labourers?—Yes.

4491. Will you explain that to the Commission?—I will. I should state that the arable land is 2,344 acres, and the meadow land 1,833 acres, and the down land 250, making up the total which I have just mentioned of 4,427. The profit sharing I started in 1887, and the first bonus distributed was in 1888.

4492. On what principle is the bonus founded?—The system is to pay, first, the rent; the interest on capital, which is 5 per cent.; labour, and the purchase of stock, and working expenses; in fact, everything; and then allot a proportion of the surplus of profits as bonus to the employée.

4493. How much is devoted to that?—The number of people employed on the farm is from 178 as a maximum to 154 as a minimum, that includes women; and roughly speaking about 100 men receive the bonus.

4494. Are they the permanent men in your service?—Yes, they are men who have worked two years on the farm; it is limited to those; they come on after two years.

4495. Assuming that there is profit after paying rent and interest on capital, how much is distributed among the men?—We distribute the bonus on the shares, so many shillings each; roughly speaking, the farm manager gets at the rate of ten shares, and the foremen at the rate of two shares, and the ordinary labourers one share, and the boys half a share.

4496. Is the whole of the profits, after paying rent and interest on capital, distributed in this way, or only a proportion?—Only a proportion, one-fourth.

4497. I presume if there are no profits or losses, no deduction is made from their wages; they simply share the profits and not the losses?—Quite so. In order to meet that difficulty, which is a very great difficulty, I have had to average the profits over a series of years. Of course, farming must be estimated, the losses and the gains extending over a series of years, and as the employées do not bear any proportion of the losses in bad years, it follows that the bonus must be calculated on a varying basis.

4498. What period of years would you calculate it upon?—I have taken a period of six years, and I have estimated the profits from 800*l*. to 1,000*l*.

4499. And one-fourth of that has been distributed?—Yes, in the way I have described to you.

4500. As I understand it, it is a voluntary arrangement on your part, it is not a special contract?—No.

4501. And therefore it would not entitle them to call upon you for an account?—No.

4502. And it is a voluntary arrangement which you have of your own will conceded to the men?—Quite so, and for that reason I call it a bonus.

4503. You do not show your account to the men?—I have never shown the accounts, but I have told them, I do not think that they take much notice of it, that they may see the certified accounts, the balance sheet as audited by the auditor.

4504. I think you stated that this began in 1887, and 1888 was the first year in which you paid any bonus?—That is so.

4505. Was that taken on the average of six years?—That was paid on that year.

4506. When did you begin the system of averages?—Well, the first year which was a profitable year, I paid them 60*s*., which was the highest a man received, It worked out something between from six to seven per cent. upon his wages.

4507. In that favourable year?—That year I could have given a little more, because that was a good year, and the year where I had made a very considerable profit, the Jubilee year, I did not distribute more, feeling quite certain that the profit would not keep up, and I only distributed what I thought would be probably the average profit, and that I put at 1,000*l*., and it has worked out rather short of that.

4508. Last year and the current year have you been able to distribute a bonus, owing to estimating profits on an average of years?—I gave them a bonus, but it was a very much diminished one. I gave a bonus out of the surplus which I had put aside, a certain sum out of previous profit years and the bonus came to a very small sum, only 10*s*. per man.

4509. Then it has ranged from 60*s*. to 10*s*.?—Quite so.

Effect of the profit-sharing scheme.

4510. What in your opinion is the effect of this system upon the labourer?—I think it has a very good effect, it associates him with the profits of the farm, and it stimulates him to do his best to aid and assist in bringing out a profit. It is a subject of interest to him. It is a matter of agreeable conversation between me and the men when I meet them as to the possibility or probability of the bonus, and they appreciate it. Those last two years I have called them all together and I have explained to them that the farm had made a very considerable loss last year, and again this year, which they quite comprehend. I think the labourer very often thinks that the farmer is doing very much better than he is doing; he is under the impression that the farmer is making a profit when the fact is that the farmer is losing money.

4511. And you think by this association of the labourers in the profits of the farm, and not with the losses that they are stimulated to greater exertion and take a greater interest in the tillage of the farm?—I think so, my personal experience of it is in favour of it, it has not come to a very large sum. I hope it will improve.

4512. But I presume you would hardly think of making it a matter of legal contract?—No, I do not think it would answer.

4513. Therefore it must be in the nature of a voluntary arrangement?—Quite so.

4514. At the will of the farmer or landowner?—Quite so, and I do not think that the labourer expects anything else except that.

Valuation of stock.

4515. In making up the accounts of the farm for the year I presume there is a valuation of the stock?—Yes.

4516. Is the increase or decrease of that stock taken into the profit or loss account?—Yes, it is. I have a neighbouring agent well known in Oxfordshire, Mr. Franklin, who has for years valued my stock. Soon after the 1st October he values the stock and takes the current price of the day, or the market price, whatever it is. He counts heads, and then values the stock.

4517. A comparatively small rise of value of the stock might make a very important difference in the annual profit or loss without being a substantial one, because you keep year after year the same amount of stock?—That is so, no doubt it does and some people find fault with that system because they say that it is only an estimated loss or an estimated profit; but it is difficult to see how you can devise any better plan. Of course the valuation of the stock on the farm is of great importance in letting you know what your losses or profits have been, so far as relates to the unsold stock in the farm.

Co-operative stores for the sale of produce.

4518. Do you have anything in the way of co-operative stores for the sale of produce in the neighbourhood?—Yes, I have. I think it brings a much better article within reach of the labourer. He has a market which is probably a better one than he could have obtained if he was to deal with a small tradesman.

4519. Have you a co-operative bakery on your own estate?—Yes, I have a co-operative bakery and a co-operative butchery, and a co-operative grocery, and all carried on on the principle of the Rochdale co-operative system.

4520. And I suppose they buy their materials from the farm?—Yes, the butcher buys all his material from the farm. The baker obtains his wherever he can find it most convenient. The agricultural labourer is a bad marketer, he never knows what to buy, and when he has bought it he does not know how to make the best use of it.

Wages.

4521. Do you pay the same wages?—Yes, the same wages all round as are paid in my neighbourhood, 10*s*. a week. I pay the same price as the neighbouring farmers.

4522. Have they risen or fallen of late years?—They have rather fallen.

4523. What was the maximum rate a few years ago?—Perhaps 1*s*. or 2*s*. more. I think the wages are rather lower than they were; I have known 12*s*. per week.

Cottage rent.

4524. (*Lord Cobham*.) Do they pay cottage rent out of that?—They pay cottage rent out of that.

4525. What do they pay?—The maximum is 1*s*. 6*d*. per week.

Rural depopulation.

4526. (*Chairman*.) Do you experience the same kind of thing in your district as is found elsewhere, namely, that the best labourers are gradually going off the land and going into large towns?—I think the young ones certainly do, and I do not see that anything can stop them going away. But the married men, the good married men, remain. The man marries and gets a comfortable cottage and good garden, he is anchored to the land, and I do not think that he goes away. But the whole aim and object of those men when they have brought a boy up and taught him something in the village school is to make him something better than an agricultural labourer, either on a railway as a porter, or a policeman, or a gardener. Whatever you may do for them, however comfortable you may make their homes, these young lads will go, and I do not think you can stop them from going.

Quality of labour.

4527. Do you see any deterioration of labour in your district on that account?—I think not. I think the labourers are quite as good as they were. I do not think that there is any appearance of deterioration amongst them. I think a good cottage and a garden is a great inducement to a married man to stay.

Labourers' cottages.

4528. I think you have done a great deal in the way of building and improving cottages?—Yes, I have restored a great many and built some, but mostly they have been restored.

Rates.

4529. With regard to the local rates, what is your experience with regard to them?—I have not got very much to complain of with regard to rates. Of course the last two years I have been paying rates out of nothing. I have made no profits at all, and all the time I have been paying a rate of 2*s.* in the pound. I am speaking of myself as a tenant now. I have been paying my rates not out of profits, but in spite of losses.

4530. Your rates are now 2*s.*?—A little over 2*s.* in the pound.

4531. Have they risen or fallen of late years?—I do not think they have risen.

4532. Taking a term of years, I suppose it is about 2*s.*?—I think so. The education rate has risen, and there is a special sanitary rate now; I have not seen that in my own individual case, but that I believe is a new rate which appears to be coming on.

4533. Taking the aggregate of rates, have they remained about the same?—About the same.

4534. There is no school board?—No school board.

4535. Has the assessment of your land been reduced in proportion to the rent?—It has been reduced.

4536. What has been the reduction?—I suppose it has very much corresponded with the rent.

4537. Then if the rate in the pound remains the same you derive some benefit from the reduction of assessment?—Yes, but I do not suppose that that is the case. The rate has remained about stationary, and the rental has fallen off, so that the proportion between the rate and the rental would show a rise.

4538. But I understood it was about 2*s.* in the pound now, and it has remained at that rate for some years?—That is my experience.

4539. Then if the assessment of your land is reduced your aggregrate payment must be less than it was?—It would be less.

4540. And generally would you say that farmers in your district have had their assessment reduced in proportion to the reduction of the rent?—Certainly.

4541. Have they benefited to that extent?—Yes. I think the rates have not grown. They have rather diminished. The number of people receiving poor law relief is much less than it was.

4542. It all turns upon whether you are accurate in your statement that it remains stationary at 2*s.* in the pound?—Quite so.

4543. If the assessment is reduced it necessarily follows that the actual burden is less than it was?—Yes, and that has turned out to be the fact.

Estate in Northamptonshire.

4544. Turning now to the Northamptonshire property without going into the details of those figures which you have been good enough to lay before us, and which may be useful to us, the result shows a very large reduction upon your net rates, does it not?—Quite so. (*See* Appendix A., XVII.)

Acreage.

4545. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) May we ask the acreage?—I do not know whether it is here, but I know the acreage of the whole area is something like 28,000 acres.

4546. (*Chairman.*) Is that the present acreage?—Yes, that is so.

Reduced rental.

4547. The present acreage is about 28,000 acres, and the present gross rent is 29,800*l.*?—Yes.

4548. Showing a little over 1*l.* an acre?—Yes.

4549. And I observe from the figures that about 20 years ago the gross rent on this estate was 61,800*l.*?—Yes.

4550. From that there has to be deducted about 7,600*l.* a year, owing to changes in the aera?—Yes.

4551. Some 7,000 acres went away from the property?—Yes.

4552. And on the other hand, there has been some addition, and according to the account on those two items, the comparison would be between 54,000*l.* 20 years ago and 29,800*l.* at the present time?—That is about right.

4553. And reducing the deductions in the same proportion it would seem that the net income has been reduced from about 44,000*l.* or 45,000*l.* a year to 12,000*l.* a year?—Yes.

4554. Therefore there has been a heavy reduction of the gross rent?—Yes, that is so.

4555. And inasmuch as the outgoings appear to have rather increased than diminished, the net result is a very unfavourable one?—In point of rental it is, indeed.

Expenditure on improvements.

4556. Apparently, during that period you have found it incumbent upon you to spend very large sums of money in buildings?—Yes.

4557. And apparently the expenditure on buildings under the somewhat reduced area has increased from an average of 4,000*l.* or 5,000*l.* a year to 8,000*l.* or 9,000*l.* a year?—That was a good deal owing to increased cottage property, cottages, in fact.

4558. That is in the way of improvement in the estate; it is necessary to have them in order to help the farmers to keep their best men?—Yes. I have always been under the impression that it is better than reducing the rent, if a farmer gives an option between reducing the rent and building him a cottage, the wiser course is to give a cottage which permanently improves the land, rather than to reduce his rent.

Reduced rental.

4559. I have been taking just now the comparison between 1872 and the present year. But really the comparison ought to be made between 1877 and the present year?—Yes, because of the reduction of the area.

4560. No, apparently the rents have reached their maximum, and therefore the true comparison would be the net income of 47,000*l.* a year and 12,000*l.* a year; in other words, the net income is reduced by one-fourth of what it was?—Yes.

4561. The gross rental is after the deductions from the reduced area from 63,000*l.* to 29,000*l.* a year?—Yes.

4562. And therefore the gross rental is reduced rather more than 50 per cent.?—It is 29,842*l.*

4563. You deducted 7,000*l.* a year from the 70,000*l.* which was the rent in 1877; that would be 63,000*l.* a year, and the present rental is 29,800*l.*, call it 30,000*l.*; therefore there has been a reduction in the aggregate rent of rather more than 50 per cent.?—Quite so; I follow those figures.

4564. And apparently the reductions began in the year 1884, and have been continuing ever since?—There were temporary reductions in 1879. In 1884 there were further reductions, and it has been going on progressively since then.

4565. And since then I think it is that the property of 7,000*l.* a year has been let away?—Yes, that is so.

4566. Have you observed any difference between the reductions of rent in the different parts of the country where these estates lie, or are they about the same?—Perhaps in Buckinghamshire, where I have some property, I think dairy farms, have been rather less, but as a rule when reductions have been made, I have not discriminated.

4567. You have given it over the whole property?—Yes, all round.

4568. What has been the result upon the tenants of those large reductions; have those large reductions enabled them to get over this period of difficulty?—Yes, they have.

Changes of tenancy.

4569. You have not had many changes of tenants?—Most of the old tenants are on their farms still; there are some changes.

4570. But not more than the normal number?—Out of the whole estate I have only got one farm in hand.

The letting of farms.

4571. When a farm is vacant have you been able to let it?—Yes.

4572. Have you had many applicants for vacant farms?—For the small ones, perhaps more than the large ones.

4573. Not for the large ones?—There has been more difficulty with the large ones; but still I have by constant concessions been able to keep the tenants.

Expenditure on repairs.

4574. I observe from this return that the cost of maintenance of gates and fences has largely increased?—Well, the tenants are very unwilling to do it.

4575. And the repairs of buildings apparently are large?—There was one item which I had to concede, that is the painting. In the old-fashioned days the tenants did the painting, and now I do not know whether they can do it, but they will not.

Reduced rental.

4576. Taking it generally the reductions have been very considerable and the net rental is very seriously reduced?—I am in hopes that they will go up next year. I am in hopes that this 12,000*l.* will go up next year. On the top of previous reductions I reduced them 17½ per cent. this year.

4577. Each of the last two years?—Yes.

4578. Then that 29,000*l.* or 30,000*l.* in the last year is the result of not only permanent reduction but also of temporary abatements which you hope will not be permanent?—I hope they will not be permanent. I do not anticipate that they will.

4579. And you think that those great reductions and temporary abatements practically saved the tenants?—Yes, I think so. The proof of it is that I have every farm let, and as far as I know I do not anticipate having farms thrown on my hands.

Position of the tenants.

4580. Do you think that the tenants retain their tenants' capital or not?—I think they do. I rather think so—some do.

4581. Are the farms well-stocked?—They are well-stocked and in good condition.

4582. And there is no appearance of bad cultivation?—No. This year I am bound to say that it looked worse than ever it did before. I have had four or five tenants who without giving notice have said that they cannot go on.

The season of 1893.

4583. This year has been a very bad year from the drought?—It has.

4584. You have had a combination of bad prices and bad seasons?—Yes.

4585. And low prices?—Yes.

Yearly agreements.

4586. Do the tenants on those estates also hold on yearly tenancies?—Yes, the same as yearly tenancies under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

Shooting rights.

4587. Do any of them have the game on the holdings?—I have a concurrent right with the tenant for the shooting.

4588. Both winged game and ground game?—Everything.

4589. In fact you have carried the principle of the Ground Game Act to other game?—Precisely.

4590. Then they cannot let the shooting I presume?—No, they are restricted from letting it.

4591. (*Lord Cobham.*) You have the shooting on your own farm?—Yes, on my own land of course.

Disappearance of small millers and shopkeepers.

4592. (*Chairman.*) Is there any other point which I have not asked you about to which you wish to draw the attention of the Commission?—I was going to say something about milling, about the extraordinary number of little millers who disappear from the face of the earth. It is an industry which has been knocked on the head; a little miller is knocked out of time by the big miller, but at present the big miller is knocked out of time by the still bigger American miller. It is a village industry which has gone.

4593. Do you observe that other village industries have gone owing to the concentration of manufactories in large towns?—I am rather inclined to think that the little shopkeepers will disappear as well. I am a very great believer in the advantage of co-operation. However sorry we may be to see the little shopkeepers knocked out of time I think the time will come when they will be overpowered in the same way as the small tradesmen in cities have been displaced by the stores.

4594. Is the small publican likely to go with the increase of clubs?—I should like the small publican to go, and I think it is highly probable that he will.

4595. You have village clubs?—Yes.

4596. And do they sell beer?—No. We have generally had a good public-house where the men assemble. We have clubs, but we have never allowed beer to be sold there.

4597. (*Mr. Little.*) You put your own manager in, did you not?—Yes. The public-house in my locality is conducted by an old soldier who has a salary of 100*l.* a year, and he has no interest in the sale of the beer at all?—He takes his salary, and all the profits which are made are carried to my agent who in point of fact runs the public-house.

Reduced rental.

4598. (*Lord Vernon.*) You have spoken two or three times about the progress of the fall in rents?—Yes.

4599. Do you not think that if there has been a fall since 1884 the fall ought to have practically taken place before, that it was only that the farmers were hanging on with the hopes of times changing enabling them to pay the old rent when they could not afford to do it?—I think the bankers kept them on their legs in a great measure.

4600. They went on paying, thinking the times would change, and hoping to pay the old rents?—Yes.

Estate in Berkshire.

4601. That estate that you have turned into a sort of co-operative works was not an entailed estate, I suppose?—No; I bought the property; it had nothing to do with me. It was a piece of land which I purchased.

4602. But even if it had turned out to be an advantageous scheme if the estate had been entailed, you would not have been able to work it in that way?—No, I could not. I could not have sold it to begin with; and the principle of those small farms is to encourage the tenants to buy by deferred payments, although, as I explained to the Chairman, we have not found that the tenants have availed themselves of the power of purchase; they do not seem to want to have anything except a small portion, they like to take a bit.

4603. The Law of Entail would be a great detriment to anybody who was desirous of selling on the purchase hire system or working on a co-operative farm, such as you mentioned?—I suppose he could sell bits of land under Lord Cairns's Act.

Graduated small holdings.

4604. Do you not think that the best system of farming is having holdings of different sizes, so that a man can grow into a bigger farmer as he saves his capital?—I think it is a very good plan that there should be an opportunity given to the labourer of having a little farm and to grow up gradually, although I think he would be too much inclined to take a bigger farm than he could cultivate by himself and his own family.

Leases.

4605. You said you thought that an understanding was almost better than a lease, did you not?—Yes.

4606. That is to say, as long as you are alive, but it might be a very poor arrangement if you happened to be succeeded by a man who did not understand the duties of property in the way that you do?—But I submit to you whether leases are not broken every day. A tenant agrees to pay rent, that rent is the fundamental part of the lease, he goes on and tells you he cannot pay his rent, and the value of the lease is gone. It has disappeared.

Expenditure on improvements.

4607. Except from the love of seeing things in order, there would not have been a sufficient inducement for you to lay out the sums of money that you have done on your property from a business point of view, would there?—I think my experience is similar to that of most landlords who have the means to do it. The tendency I think of a man who owns a property is to desire to put it in the best condition and best order that he can, perhaps not entirely with the view of making simply a profit.

4608. But if you had to raise the money from the Lands Improvement Company and if you had the risk of the burden of the debt to be paid in the future, you would not have launched out quite so readily?—I should not; certainly not.

4609. You said that you thought it would be a good thing to have loans from the State at a cheap rate of interest, and I understood you to say that you would spread it over rather a longer term of years?—I said 25 years; I would not go beyond 25 years, I think I would not. What I meant was that I would not like to have the Agricultural Department dictating to me what sort of buildings I should put up. I believe the Agricultural Department always has plans submitted to it. Supposing a company lends you money, the Agricultural Department requires that the plans of the buildings should be submitted to them to see whether they are sufficiently permanent. I should like the Agricultural Department to be very lenient.

4610. I understood you to say that the average was between 6 and 7 per cent. that was charged for the loan including the repayment of capital?—Yes.

4611. I have carefully got out what it cost, and I find that with the surveyors and the commission, and the per-centage which the Lands' Improvement Company claim, it came to considerably over 7 per cent. Do not you think that if there were less restrictions on the landowner in laying out the money that he borrowed, the cost to the landowner in putting up the buildings would be also less in consequence of not having so many surveyors?—Quite so.

Small Farms' Company

4612. (*Mr. Channing.*) In addition to the Lambourne Estate, your company had estates in Wiltshire, and two small estates in Cambridge, and also one in Essex near Colchester?—Yes.

4613. Had you approximately the same demand for these small holdings and the same readiness to pay a fair rent for them, and did you have the same experience as to the tenants getting on fairly well and paying their rent on all these estates?—No, we did not. Cambridge was disastrous.

4614. The Histon estate of course was?—Yes.

Experience of small holdings.

4615. The demand for small holdings and the general success was pretty much the same as on the estate that you referred to?—I think it was.

4616. May I ask whether you find in the case of those small tenants that they have done fairly well and been able to pay their rents on the whole?—Yes, I think so.

4617. You have expressed an opinion that on small holdings the tenants themselves can carry out the buildings more cheaply than the landlord can?—I did not intend to convey that.

4618. I do not mean in your evidence now, but I think you expressed that opinion in an article in one of the Reviews?—If I did I should rather revise that. I should not advocate it. I do not think it would lead to good results.

4619. You do not think that they could run up the sheds and the small accommodation for stock that you have referred to more cheaply with their own labour in their own way than if you did it for them?—I think they might do it more cheaply, but there are other obvious objections which certainly occur to me. Do you mean allowing the tenants to put up permanent buildings themselves on small holdings?

4620. Under 50 acres?—If I ever did express that opinion I should reconsider it. I should not advocate it.

Loans to tenants for improvements.

4621. It has been suggested by one of our witnesses here with a view to permanent improvements and buildings and so on that it would be desirable to allow tenants as well as landlords to borrow money and have a joint security. Have you any opinion as to the practicability of that?—I do not think it would answer.

4622. Have you any opinion as to the possibility of introducing the German Agricultural Loan Banks into England with a view to helping in these matters?—I have not considered it.

Quality of labour.

4623. You say that the labour has not deteriorated in your neighbourhood?—That is so.

4624. And I suppose you attribute that somewhat to the profit-sharing?—I think that is an element in the matter, and better houses and better homes and more garden accommodation and allotment. These things altogether have produced that effect.

4625. The men work very much better under the profit-sharing system?—I think it stimulates them, certainly.

4626. As you are aware I had the advantage of seeing one of your experiments in a parish where I lived for a number of years. I do not know whether you would like to refer to that?—What is it?

Profit-sharing with labourers.

4627. The working of one of the farms or two of the farms which were in your hands in Pytchley parish in Northamptonshire, they were worked one or two years under this system?—I have had no profits on that farm. I have offered a share of the profits in a particular farm in Northamptonshire, the Pytchley farm, and I believe this year there will be something to be distributed; I am told so by the bailiff.

4628. You do not think your land in Berkshire is more suitable to it?—No, I think that the Northampton farm would suit very well, I hope so. In fact, I should adopt the system on any farm of any size which I was cultivating myself.

4629. And you think it would pay farmers to adopt it, and that they would get better work out of their labourers?—I think they would; it would give the farmer perhaps a little trouble. Farmers, as you know, keep very little accounts. In many cases they do not keep any accounts at all.

4630. So that they would not be capable of carrying out this scheme?—No.

Co-operative farming.

4631. You spoke of syndicates of farmers working farms more satisfactorily in the future?—Yes.

4632. Is there any co-operative farming on your Berkshire estate?—There is a large farm which I believe is carried on in the neighbourhood of Savernake which is farmed by a syndicate. Perhaps some members of this Royal Commission may know something about it. I know the man's name. He is carrying on a large farm of over 4,000 acres.

4633. Is that successful?—I am told it is.

Wages.

4634. (*Mr. Everett.*) I have only one question to ask with regard to men's wages. You spoke of 10*s.* per week as the current wage, but they earn a good deal extra in harvest and hay time?—Certainly.

4635. And the cottages, setting any fair interest on their money value, are really worth 1*s.* or 2*s.* a week more than they pay?—No doubt they are.

4636. So that the 10*s.* does not at all represent the actual position of the men as compared with men's wages in London?—No. The Sub-commissioner to the Royal Commission on Labour (Mr. Cecil Chapman) has reported upon the district where I live, and he brings out that the weekly wages of the labourer come up to 14*s.* or 15*s.* a week taking into consideration the hay and corn harvest, and the turnip hoeing, and the various things done by piece-work.

Basis for fixing rent.

4637. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Upon what basis do you value your farms, upon the tenant's or the surveyor's estimate, when you give a reduction of rent?—I take it upon the value of similar land which is let in the neighbourhood. Do you mean in estimating the rent that ought to be paid?

4638. No. I mean upon your estate, presuming that the tenant asked you for a reduction, how do you arrive at an adequate amount that his rent should be reduced to?—I have done it wholesale all round. I have not been able to inquire into each man's case, and I suppose, like most other landlords that I am aware of, the reduction has been made a general reduction, you arrive at it partly from your experience of what the year has been, and partly by what you hear; and a general reduction is made which applies to all the tenants, whether they are dairy tenants, or corn-land tenants. I have not been able to inquire into each man's case.

4639. You think that the reductions are adequate to enable the tenant at the present rent to live in a fairly comfortable and prosperous way?—The best answer to that is that they have done so.

4640. You would have no objection to let a farm on a fair valuation made by an impartial capable valuer?—I should like to know the man first. I would rather trust myself and my agent than any valuer.

4641. Of course I meant an impartial capable valuer?—I should say that the person who is letting the farm would probably be able to come to a decision as to what rent he should ask better than any outside person.

Competition for small farms.

4642. You mentioned that you have many applicants for small farms; how would the rent be fixed in that case, where you have a dozen applicants applying for one farm?—I think it would be fixed on a sort of system of what the farms have previously let for, and taking into consideration the reduction made.

4643. You would not take the highest tender I presume or would you take the highest offer?—I do not think I would. I should like to know something about the man; of course if it was a farm of any size, I should want to know if he had got means to carry it on; I would not take the highest bid irrespective of the man's character or means.

4644. Would it be in your opinion fair where there are a large number of applications for one farm to take the highest bid?—I do not see how the fairness comes in.

4645. Do you think it would be advisable or likely to promote good farming and to promote the interest of agriculture?—I suppose farming is like other things, there is a certain amount of bargaining between the man who lets and the man who hires; there is a certain higgling of the market which comes into consideration, but qualified by so many other considerations, such as the character of the man.

4646. But would the would-be tenant competing with a dozen others be in a position to make a fair bargain with an owner who had to let a single farm?—Whether there are a number of farms or one farm it would be the same thing.

4647. I mean to say a dozen applicants for one farm; take the case of a landowner who had to let one farm for which he had a dozen applicants would those applicants be placed in a position to make a fair bargain with the landlord in taking that farm; which do you think would have the best of the bargain, the landlord or the would-be tenant?—I can hardly follow the point of your question, you assume a good deal which I do not quite admit, but if I could understand your question a little more I would try and answer it; I do not see how the point comes in exactly.

4648. Which would be in the best position to make the best bargain, the one man who had a dozen applicants for his farm, or the man who is competing with a dozen others for it?—I suppose you are pointing to the fact that the landlord is in this particular case in a much better position than the tenant.

4649. Yes?—Then I suppose the landlord. I do not think land is generally let in that way. As a mere commercial business the landlord would take the best offer which was made to him. All other things being equal, that is how it strikes me it would be done.

4650. But the two men would not approach the subject on equal conditions?—If I had two men offering me to take my farm and both were equally good, I should naturally say Mr. A. should have the farm because he offers me better terms.

4651. My point is this: that the landlord and the would-be tenant would not be in the same position as regards the bargain?—Perfectly the same, there is no difference.

4652. I should have thought that where there were a dozen applicants for a farm, those applicants would compete one after another, and would endeavour to rush the price which they could not pay merely for the sake of getting into the farm?—Presuming that they are honest men, which you must always presume, they would only offer what they could honestly pay.

4653. Have not tenants in order to keep in the farms, especially in the more prosperous times, offered rents which they could not pay?—I do not think so; they are very short-sighted men if they take a farm which they could not possibly pay the rent of, and I cannot suppose a man to be so silly as to do that.

4654. In the tabular statement that you have been good enough to place here, I see the rents have increased from 1872 to 1877 by 8,400*l.* a year; could you give us any return or any statement showing the amount of rent paid from 1860 up to 1873?—Outside that table?

4655. Thirteen years before this table?—I have not got the information here.

4656. You could not give it to us?—Probably not, it was rather a stretch to get this. I do not think I could go back 30 years, because the clerical staff was rather different to what it is now.

4657. (*Lord Cobham.*) 1876 was probably the maximum year?—Probably.

Profit-sharing with labourers.

4658. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Would you recommend profit-sharing with labourers as a general practice in agricultural operations?—On the principle of the bonus system I would.

4659. If it was not a voluntary arrangement?—It must be voluntary, it is impossible to make it a matter of business.

4660. But it would be advisable to make it a voluntary arrangement; do you think it would be wise for the farmer to make it a voluntary arrangement, what I mean would be to introduce the system of profit-sharing?—I do indeed.

Expenditure on improvements.

4661. (*Mr. Little.*) Mr. Long has asked me to put one or two questions to you with regard to the buildings and improvements on farms, does that not only mean immediate outlay, but also a continuous increased outlay?—It does.

4662. And as rent has shown a continual tendency to decrease, there has been a great discouragement to landlords to make outlay upon buildings?—For farm buildings. I do not know that that would apply to cottage building, because that distinctly helps the tenant.

4663. The question was with reference to farm buildings?—I have no doubt that he has a larger bill for the up-keep.

4664. It is only possible to have small farms where there is either good pasture or a mixed soil?—Yes.

4665. They could hardly become general where big sheep farms and down land exist?—They could not.

4666. They could not take the place of large farms in those districts?—I do not think they could.

Co-operative farming.

4667. What is in your opinion the prospect of such land as I have been describing which now is in large corn farms and downs attached?—You cannot farm a big sheep farm without capital, there is the crux that you gentlemen have to decide, namely, how to bring capital on to the land. I do not see how it is to be done. I venture to suggest, not with any confidence, but still as a possible means of doing so, that a syndicate might be able to raise money on better terms than individuals.

4668. Such a system as the syndicate that you spoke of?—Something like that. I do not put it forward as a remedy that I have any decided confidence in, but it may be possible that what is done in the commercial world dealing with quick returns and small profits on a large scale, and which has succeeded so well with those big shops all over England and abroad, might in the same way be applied to land.

4669. Arising out of that answer and your former answer, may I take it that with your experience of farming in the last six years, you think that a farmer entering upon the land at the reduced rent and on the conditions that he can now enforce, has a fair opportunity of farming at a profit?—I think a skilful man can; he gets his rent down; his labour bill must be reduced; his labour is cheaper than it was, and my impression is that the labourers' work is in some cases better than it was. I think he may be able to farm at a profit.

4670. In the case of small holdings where the rent is apparently considerably higher than that of surrounding farms, is it not generally the case that the land is composed of specially valuable land, either in regard to situation or something else?—Yes.

4671. A comparison is often made between the rental of small holdings—small farms—and the rental of larger farms?—Quite so.

4672. Would not the greater rental be partly due to the special value of the land?—Yes, it would.

4673. You said that farmers sometimes object to give up a piece of land which would be very suitable to the small holdings and allege that it is a bit of the best land and generally the most convenient?—That is so.

4674. It is sometimes near the village, sometimes the home field?—Yes, and therefore more valuable.

Profit-sharing with labourers.

4675. As to the system of profit-sharing, do you think that there is an equivalent in value for the trouble that the farmer has, and that he gets out of his man a sufficient return to pay him for that extra trouble?—I think so; I think the trouble ought not to come into consideration at all; the trouble is nothing compared in my estimation with the advantages which are to be got by it. As I tried to point out, the profits are to be taken on an average; if you had a good year you could only give the labourers a share of a good year; you must average your profits over a series of years and that entails account keeping.

4676. I think that your bonus is only given to those who are regular labourers for more than two years?—Yes.

4677. The casual labourer would not benefit at all?—No.

4678. One result might be to induce labourers to stay upon a farm longer?—I think it would be.

4679. Have you observed a tendency among the labourers to shift too frequently?—No, I have not seen that at all.

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4680. Are your labourers hired by the year, or simply engaged for the week or the fortnight?—They are villagers.

4681. But they are not hired by you?—No.

4682. They are free to go when they please?—Quite so.

4683. And they occupy cottages in the villages?—Yes.

4684. Is there any condition that they should labour on the estate?—No, it may be implied, but there is no condition.

Effect of the profit-sharing.

4685. I observe that in the two parishes with which you are more immediately connected, there has been an aggregate increase in population in the last 10 years, while the population of the whole union has decreased. Do you attribute that at all to your system of bonus sharing?—Yes, I do; I have not a doubt about it that the best labourers are on the look out to come in, and to be settled on the property where they have such advantages.

4686. The efforts that you have made by co-operative stores, and clubs, and bonuses to labourers, have, in your opinion, arrested the flow of labour to the towns to some extent?—I think, as far as the married people go, certainly.

Loans for carrying out improvements.

4687. Now with regard to the advances of State loans; first of all, may I ask as regards the expense of applying to one of these companies. Where an application was made to a land company for a loan, it was generally by a life tenant of an estate, who desired to charge the estate?—Yes.

4688. And in that case, there was some reason for appointing as it were, a guardian for the remainder man?—Yes, no doubt.

4689. And the State assumed that position?—I suppose so.

4690. And required to be satisfied that the outlay was judicious, and not of a temporary character?—I think so.

4691. Would you think this unnecessary in the case of the advance of a State loan?—I think it would be necessary within a certain scope.

4692. So long as the property was an adequate security for the charge, and if the charge were made a first charge, the landowner might perhaps have greater freedom than he has had?—Yes. I suppose this borrowing from companies only applies to persons having limited properties; a man whose property is his own, who is an unlimited owner need not go to one of these companies at all.

4693. (*Lord Vernon.*) But it takes precedence of all other loans, that is the advantage?—I see.

4694. (*Mr. Little.*) You said, I think, that you found out that the charge was 6*l*. 7*s*. 4*d*. per cent. in borrowing from these companies?—Yes.

4695. Are you aware that the Government lend to the authorities in Ireland for the purpose of building cottages at 3¼ per cent.?—At the same time paying off within a certain period.

4696. 3¼ per cent. is the basis of the loan, but by an annual payment of 4*l*. 9*s*. 2*d*. the sum can be redeemed in 50 years. Would it not be an advantage to the landowners of England if they were advanced money on the same terms?—I think it would.

4697. And do you think that the difference would be sufficient to induce them to spend money on the improvements that are required?—I think it would encourage them.

4698. (*Lord Cobham.*) Would it not be a loss to the landlords who would not get 5 per cent. out of the cottages?—It would be a loss; they would not get 5 per cent.

4699. How much do you think you would get?—I do not think you would get 2 per cent.; about 2 per cent. I should think.

Horse-breeding.

4700. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) I think you have a large and valuable stud of shire horses; do you keep them on this farm in Berkshire?—Yes.

4701. Does anything in connexion with the stud enter into the accounts of that farm?—Yes, it does.

4702. The profits and losses of that are shown on the accounts?—Yes, they are all shown on the accounts of profits and losses, and the purchase of the horses.

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4703. Would the periodical sales be included?—Yes, but I have not had a periodical sale yet.

4704. But in the year that that periodical sale would come the profit would be naturally very much greater than in the other years?—Yes.

4705. And that would appear in the average of the six years for your labourers?—That would have to be averaged.

4706. Although they have nothing to do with the stud in any way?—They have a good deal to do with the stud, they look after the horses. I should say this case would be eminently one which would show the advantage of the bonus system, because a man may very soon do your horse an injury if he is not very careful; the man who takes care of and exercises your horses should have a share as well as the ordinary farm labourer.

4707. You intend to let all the profits and losses come into this account?—Averaged.

4708. I understand. Does your bailiff at all find that these men, having nothing whatever to do with the buying and selling, make any trouble about the buying or selling, or about the fancy prices for the stock?—Not a word.

Labourers' cottages.

4709. You consider it better to give a cottage rather than a reduction of rent?—Yes.

4710. Does not that tend to show that the farm has not had sufficient accommodation before?—It would, I think, certainly.

4711. You would hold that a tenant should have full and ample accommodation?—I think that he ought to have good cottage accommodation.

Profit-sharing with labourers.

4712. To return for a moment to that profit sharing. I was going to ask if it is true, as it is put before us constantly, that there are no profits made by the general tenant farmer who carries out agriculture on the general basis, what inducement would there be for labourers to join in the profit-sharing?—None at all, if there were no profits they would have no share in them.

Wages.

4713. With reference to this weekly wage that seems to be current in your district, is it in your opinion sufficient for a man to live upon, and bring up a family properly, in your part of the country?—The proof of it is that they do live, and do bring up families very respectably.

4714. And live in a comfortable state?—In very great comfort; but I am pointing out that every able-bodied labourer can earn a good deal by piece-work. I have alluded to that.

4715. But I understood that those men were the men working on this farm?—Yes.

4716. They do a good deal of piece-work?—They bring their wages up to 14*s*. and 15*s*. per week by harvest work, and hay harvest, and hoeing, and various other things.

Horse breeding.

4717. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) May I ask whether the profits on your Lordship's estate are considerable?—The sale which is alluded to by the honourable Commissioner has never taken place; I have never had a sale, but I am going to have one.

4718. Are there any profits at all?—Well, there are. I have got a stallion which I bought out of the farm profits, and anything which is earned by the stud of shire horses is carried to the account of profit on the farm.

4719. And therefore they would make the profits of the farm larger?—They might or might not, but I hope they will.

4720. Have they done so?—Yes, I think they have fairly done so; when you have a sale it is the accumulation of some years; you accumulate animals.

4721. I was going to point out that it would put your Lordship in a better position than that of the tenant farmers around?—I heard a case of a tenant farmer having sold three yearling shire horses, and he realised 400*l*. for them.

4722. And it is usual for tenants in your district to do so?—Yes, good cart horses are not much bred in my district yet.

4723. They have the same advantages as you have?—It is not a good horse-breeding district, far from it; I wish it was. At the agricultural shows I give a prize for the best mare, and I allow the tenant farmer

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who wins the prize to put the mare to my shire horse free. I may say that gradually the farmers are taking to cart horses, they pay better than bullocks, as far as I can see.

Small Farms' Company.

4724. With regard to the small holdings which you have established in your parishes, I think you said that the size of those varied from 20 to 50 acres?—That is the Small Farms' Company; that has nothing to do with my estate.

4725. May I ask whether the profits of those farms have been greater than those of larger farms around?—No, I think something like about 3 per cent. has been paid upon the whole transaction of the Company.

4726. I meant the profits to each individual holder, whether they were larger than that of any other tenants round about?—You mean the profits to the holders themselves?

4727. Yes?—I can only judge it by what they do. They go on, we may conclude that they go on successfully.

4728. And they manage to live?—Yes.

4729. And they do the labour themselves?—Yes, we never have a farm vacant. As soon as a farm is vacant it is taken up by someone else.

4730. And as to the allotments in the same parish, they are not connected with that company?—This Small Farms' Company has nothing to do with allotments.

Experience of small holdings.

4731. Do you find that the labourers rise to those larger allotments?—Yes, I think there is a tendency for an allotment of an acre; I know a good many labourers who like an acre of land. Some people think that they are not wise, but my experience is that they do it well, and with advantage to themselves.

4732. (*Lord Cobham.*) They have allotments besides gardens of their own?—Yes, they grow a little corn.

4733. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) What I wanted to ask was whether the labourers from their allotments rise to larger holdings?—I could not say, I have not seen that they have. I do not think that they could, because their whole capital is in their own labour; they cannot lay by anything; at least not out of the profits of the allotment.

4734. They would have the opportunity?—Yes, I suppose that there are cases of their taking larger holdings.

Quality of labour.

4735. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You have expressed the opinion that labour about you has not deteriorated. But have you found any want of skilled labour for the purpose of thatching and trimming hedges, and things of that kind, which require skilled agricultural labour?—Well, thatching has so much gone out of fashion with us, and straw is such a valuable article, that it is not much used.

4736. You put up hay barns?—Hay barns.

4737. And you have all the latest improvements in that way?—I have not all, but I have got some.

Co-operative stores.

4738. As regards the co-operative stores in your village, do you take any leading part in it, or do you let the labourers form their own committee and manage it themselves?—It is managed chiefly by my agent, or rather, I should say, supervised by him, but the management is entirely in the hands of a salaried officer or manager.

4739. And anybody outside may join those stores?—Anybody may purchase at them. Anybody may buy, and the only profits that we share are the profits which are distributed amongst the buyers after paying 4 per cent. upon the original capital.

4740. Does the store deliver goods?—Yes, they do; we have got three or four horses which are constantly on the road carrying.

4741. May I ask are those subsidised by you?—No; all the accounts are kept perfectly separate.

4742. It is a self-supporting institution?—I contribute in no way to it; I buy at it.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

4743. Are all your properties under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

4744. Have you had to bring any of the tenants into court?—I have never been in court.

4745. Has it worked well on your estate?—Yes, I think so, I have never had any differences.

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4746. On your farms do you sell your stock by weight or by auction?—I sell it by weight to the co-operative store; the butchery takes my stock, and I sell all that by weight.

Sale by live-weight.

4747. May I ask how it is valued?—At the current newspaper price of the week, whatever the weekly price is as given in the papers so much per lb.

The estate accounts.

4748. (*Lord Cobham.*) To elucidate the return you have furnished I want to ask a question. Where do the repairs come in, under "buildings," or under "agency in general"?—Under "buildings."

4749. You have the new buildings and repairs in one column?—That is column 3.

4750. That includes maintenance and wages and the sum spent on fences?—Yes, that is the next column.

4751. Is the column for woods and plantations, and also brick and tile yard, a net or a gross return of expenditure?—No, that is the money expended taking woods and plantations, the gross money spent on that paricular department.

4752. And the receipts will come in under "annual gross income"?—Yes.

4753. And the same with the brick and tile yard?—Yes.

4754. That had dwindled down to 28*l.*?—I suspect I found that it did not answer, and I knocked off the brickyard.

4755. Have you any explanation to give as to the enormous increase of voluntary payments, the local subscriptions, I presume?—My explanation is that in the previous time they did not appear.

4756. It is a new item brought in?—These voluntary payments were not charged to the estate, they were paid out of some other source.

4757. And the tithe rentcharge would come under the rates and taxes?—Yes.

Price of wheat and straw.

4757A. (*Chairman.*) Have you found that the increased price of straw has to some extent made up for the lower price of wheat?—In answer to this I give the present price of straw and the present price of wheat. The present value of wheat straw is 4*l.* per ton, free on rail. The cost of delivery to the nearest station would be 6*s.* per ton, tying and carting. The manurial value of one ton of wheat straw is 10*s.*, or, in other words, it could be converted into two cart loads of dung at 5*s.* per load. 1 ton 5 cwt. is the average weight of wheat straw grown per acre, although as much as two tons per acre is often grown. Wheat straw last season was only making 30*s.* per ton, free on rail; the expense of delivery being the same as now. About 30 bushels of wheat is grown per acre. The average price of best white wheat now is 3*s.* 9*d.* per bushel, 5*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* per acre. Supposing straw keeps up at the price at which it now is, the enhanced price would to some extent make up for the lower price of wheat. It must be remembered, however, that land is deteriorated by the sale of straw.

Condition of farmers.

4757B. Do you consider that the condition of the farmers on your Northamptonshire and Berkshire estates has deteriorated?—The condition of the farmers is less good than it was: their capital is diminished. On the other hand farmers are meeting their difficulties by more economical management and greater attention to business.

Changes in system of farming.

4758. Do you consider that the tenants might have done more to meet the difficulties of the last few years by striking out into new lines and by giving more attention to poultry, vegetables, fruit, &c.?—In some cases I think they might: but poultry, vegetables, and fruit-growing can only be carried on advantageously in favourable districts and in proximity to markets. Such industries generally succeed better on small farms than on large ones. Tenants can alter their system only by degrees. For many years corn-growing was the most remunerative business, and to this their whole attention was devoted: land is now being extensively laid down in grass, but it is not all land that is suited to it. Where the soil is favourable for pasture I think more might be done in dairying. Those who have visited Denmark with the view of studying the system of butter-making there, report that England is five and twenty years behind it. The import of butter into England amounts to ten million sterling annually. Some at least of this ought to be secured by our English farmers.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to Thursday next at 12 o'clock.

Tenth Day.

Thursday, 14th December 1893.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., in the Chair.

Viscount Cobham.	Francis Allston Channing, Esq., M.P.
The Right Hon. Baron Vernon.	John Clay, Esq.
The Right Hon. Henry Chaplin, M.P.	Cornelius Neale Dalton, Esq.
Sir Robert Nigel Fitzhardinge Kingscote, K.C.B.	Robert Lacey Everett, Esq., M.P.
Robert Giffen, Esq., C.B.	George Lambert, Esq., M.P.
Charles Isaac Elton, Esq., Q.C.	William Cutlack Little, Esq.
	Charles Whitehead, Esq., F.L.S.

Herbert Lyon, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. Crawford, Esq., } *Assistant*
Freeman Thomas, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. W. J. Harris.
14 Dec. 1893.

Mr. William James Harris recalled and further examined.

(For previous evidence *see* page 95.)

Disadvantages to the English farmer.

4759. (*Lord Vernon.*) I believe you wish to make a slight correction in your previous evidence?—Yes. On looking at the notes of my evidence I find that I have added the figures up wrongly. It is in answer to Question 3438. It should be: "I consider the disadvantages that English farmers suffer, compared with "foreign farmers, amount to 102*s*. per acre"—not 82*s*. per acre—and that the advantage which the English farmers gain, as against the foreign farmers, amounts to 65*s*. instead of 55*s*. That is in answer to Question 3440.

4760. 102*s*. as against 82*s*. is one. What is the other?—65*s*. against 55*s*. In the latter part of my answer to Question 3438 I say that I have put the short yield at 40*s*. per acre, that is as against the foreigner; that is in yield, the average short yield; but it ought to be nearly 50*s*. per acre, because 14 bushels to the acre, at the present price, would come to nearly 50*s*. instead of 40*s*.; that is to say, the English farmer produces more to the acre, and pays less in carriage to market, and that gives 65*s*. in the one case as against 102*s*. in the other, and that being so I have had to alter your Lordship's allusion to it in Question 3439—"(*Lord Vernon.*) 82*s*. to the acre you say?"—102*s*. to the acre I have made it in that question. I may mention that in No. 3438, I have altered it, in my answer, to 102*s*., and I have altered the 40*s*. into 50*s*. Those are the only corrections. I just wanted the consent of the Commission, because I gave the evidence rather hurriedly, and I had to alter this. But that is the only material point I have to alter. (*Note.—These questions and answers were confined to corrections made in the witness's previous evidence, which were allowed by the Commission.*) I thought I could save a good deal of the time of the Commission if I were to give as quickly as I can the cost of production in the various countries that I have visited.

Cost of production in the Colonies.

(*a.*) South Australia.

4761. If you will do that we shall be obliged?—It will save a good many questions, and any necessary questions could come afterwards equally well. In South Australia, when I was there the Government gave me free passes and other facilities, and I went from one end of the colony to the other.

4762. When was that?—About six or eight months ago, in the month of April, I think. In South Australia wheat has been more largely grown than in any other of our Australian colonies. The system has been simply one of exhaustion. The yield per acre has decreased with every crop, and the greater part of the good wheat land has been reduced from giving 20 to 30 bushels at first to an average yield now of 6 or 7 bushels. A system of rotation farming, including the fattening of sheep, could be adopted, which would gradually restore fertility. Already Professor Lowrie, at Roseworthy College, has shown that he can grow 20 bushels to the acre by this means on land no better than that producing 6 bushels to the acre. I saw a great many instances where the sheddings of one crop were left to make another. The practice of harvesting by means of a stripper requires that the grain should be very ripe; the consequence is that there is often a good deal of grain shed *during* and previous to the cutting. The heads are cut off and threshed as the machine moves along. The standing straw is burnt, the land is either scratched with a harrow or shallow ploughed with a 3 or 4 furrow plough, and all the operations cost no more than 10*s*. per acre, or say 1*s*. 8*d*. per bushel for a 6 bushel yield. The cost of sending this to the shipping port, bagging up, &c., is about 6*d*. per bushel. Thus 8 bushels, making 1 quarter, cost about 17*s*. free on board. The freight and insurance to England is about 7*s*., and thus the net cost is about 24*s*. for what, at to-day's value, brings 28*s*. here. A yield of 8 to 10 bushels may be obtained from spending more on the preparation of the land, but the crop seldom costs more than 20*s*. per acre. These figures show how a very inferior crop may be grown in a hot climate, and shipped at present prices, with the result of robbing the soil, a practice which cannot be copied by English farmers. A change will, no doubt, take place in the system of farming in South Australia. Alternate crops will be grown for fattening good breeds of sheep, and I look for a large supply of mutton at very low prices within a short period of time. The wheat yield per acre will then be much larger than it is now.

(*b.*) Victoria.

Then I come to Victoria, which is, next to South Australia, the largest wheat-producing colony in Australasia. The system I have described as not unusual in South Australia, namely, that of harvesting without sowing is sometimes practised in Victoria. The land, however, has not been cropped for so many years and retains more of its original fertility. Moreover, a large breadth of the Mallee country (which extends over 8,000,000 acres) is now being broken up for wheat. This land was a few years ago considered valueless on account of the difficulty of clearing it from the Mallee scrub. That has been overcome, and the land can now be cleared at something under 5*s*. per acre. The scrub is burnt, and the ashes act as a manure. I saw one field which had been cropped with wheat for nine years in succession. I brought samples home from this field. The top soil is described by Dr. Voelcker as

Price of corn.

undergoing exhaustion, but the subsoil he still describes as being "rich and not deficient in any of the "main elements of fertility." The cultivation and harvesting of an acre of the Mallee country costs about 23*s*. The yield may be calculated at 12 to 14 bushels, costing, say, 1*s*. 10*d*. per bushel. The cost of conveying to port and shipping, including cost of bags, is about 8*d*. per bushel. Thus at 20*s*. per quarter the wheat can be put on board ship, and the freight and insurance of 7*s*. per quarter make it cost very nearly the current price here. Any profit to the farmer must be from the work that he and his family do, for at present prices there can be little left for rent or sinking fund, and as the mode of culture is gradually producing sterility, this is an important drawback. If wheat were 1*s*. per bushel dearer the greater part of the Maller district would probably come under cultivation. I apprehend that alternate cropping and the fattening of large numbers of sheep will be more generally followed as time passes; but I believe that wheat will be produced as cheaply then as it is now owing to the increased yield, and the alternate crop will pay as a mutton producer.

(*c*.) New South Wales.

Now coming to New South Wales, I have already in my previous examination before this Commission given some account of the rich lands I visited in the Murrimbidgee district. I described one paddock which had been cropped with wheat for over 20 years. Since then I have had a letter from the farmer with whom I stayed; he writes as follows: "The crops every-"where look well. On the paddock where 22 crops "have been taken off it looks this year over 20 bushels. "My son has a beautiful crop on his newly turned "land. He expects on an average 25 bushels." As I said in my previous evidence, I believe there are nearly 50,000,000 acres of land of similar quality to this in New South Wales and Queensland, with a sufficient rainfall, say from 16 to 22 inches, which only requires an extension of the present railway system to bring it into communication with the shipping ports. The land has hitherto only been used as a sheep run with trifling exceptions. The cost of clearing was considered the great bar to its cultivation, but what was supposed some years ago to cost 10*l*. per acre is now found by the system of ring-barking and burning to cost only 10*s*. The expense of cultivating for wheat after clearing is about 23*s*. per acre. Taking the yield at only 18 bushels it thus costs about 1*s*. 4*d*. per bushel, which includes cost of bags. The carriage to the shipping port and expenses is about 6*d*. per bushel. Thus one quarter of wheat costs 14*s*. 8*d*. The freight and insurance at 7*s*. brings this up to 21*s*. 8*d*. net, with no profit at all either for the grower or merchant. You must bear in mind that all these prices that I am giving are the exact net cost; there is nothing left for deterioration of land or even rent of land. The value in London to-day is 28*s*., cost, freight, and insurance. This profit is quite sufficient to encourage cultivation. I brought samples of the soil home with me, and I hand in Dr. Voelcker's Report. If the Commission would like it they could have it put in the Appendix (*the Chairman assented*). (See Appendix A., XI.) I would particularly call attention to his report of the soil taken from the surface of the field which had borne 22 crops in succession. I do not believe there is any large extent of better wheat land in any other country of the world. Mutton is likely to be exported in large quantities, and also dairy produce.

(*d*.) New Zealand.

Then I come to New Zealand. New Zealand is farmed more as we farm in England, but the expense of manuring is thus far only incurred to the smallest possible extent. As a rule, the land is far more easily tilled than ours, and the difference in expenditure on these accounts may amount to 40*s*. per acre in the cost of an acre of wheat. In some parts the yield is so large that it pays to grow wheat even at present low prices. I will give an instance. Near Asburton, in the Province of Canterbury, there is a farm of 15,000 acres called Longbrach, belonging to Mr. John Grigg, a Cornishman. For the production of wheat and mutton I doubt there being a better farm in the world. When I was there Mr. Grigg had just harvested 4,600 acres of wheat, yielding 37 bushels to the acre. The cost was as follows:—Ploughing by contract, 5*s*.; rolling, 10*d*.; disc harrowing, 10*d*.; tine harrowing, three times at 9*d*., 2*s*. 3*d*.; drilling, 1*s*. 6*d*.; seed, one bushel per acre, 3*s*.; spring rolling, 10*d*.; harvesting, contract price, 14*s*.; threshing, 2*d*. per bushel, 6*s*. 2*d*.; carriage to port and loss on bags, 15*s*. 5*d*., making a total cost of 2*l*. 9*s*. 10*d*., equal to 1*s*. 4½*d*. per bushel, or 10*s*. 10*d*. per quarter of eight bushels; then adding freight and insurance, 7*s*. 6*d*., makes it come to 18*s*. 4*d*. for cost, freight, and insurance. Thus Mr. Grigg could ship wheat without absolute loss at 18*s*. 4*d*. per quarter to England; but his land had cost him at least 1*l*. per acre in interest of money and taxes, and he would have commission and risks which together would be equivalent to about 5*s*. 8*d*. per quarter, making the cost of this fine white wheat 24*s*. per quarter. The value to-day in England is 26*s*.

4763. You have got to add the freight to the 24*s*.?—No; I have added the freight. 10*s*. 10*d*. is the price free on board.

4764. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Where is this farm?—In New Zealand.

4765. (*Lord Cobham.*) That is on Canterbury Plain?—Yes, you may know Mr. Grigg. The cost per acre is 2*l*. 9*s*. 10*d*.; the yield is 37 bushels to the acre, and that works out at 1*s*. 4½*d*. per bushel, or 10*s*. 10*d*. per quarter of 8 bushels, and with freight and insurance, 7*s*. 6*d*., it comes to 18*s*. 4*d*. Thus, as I have said, Mr. Grigg could ship wheat without absolute loss at 18*s*. 4*d*. per quarter to England; but his land had cost him at least 1*l*. per acre in interest of money and taxes, and he would have commission and risks which together would be equivalent to about 5*s*. 8*d*. per quarter, making the cost of this fine white wheat 24*s*. per quarter. That is reckoning so much upon every quarter for the rent, all the expenses of his land, improvements, and also commission that he would naturally have to pay on selling the wheat. The value to-day in England is 26*s*. On farms further south, where oats are principally grown, the yield is from 60 to 100 bushels per acre. The cost of cultivation is about 30*s*. per acre. The oats can be put on board ship at 9*d*. per bushel, or 6*s*. per quarter, and the freight and insurance at 6*s*. 6*d*. per quarter would enable the farmer to ship good oats to England at 12*s*. 6*d*. to 13*s*. without actual loss. These oats are so fine that to-day's value in England would pay nearly 10*s*. per quarter profit. This would, however, leave nothing for rent or interest on outlay in New Zealand. I must explain that I have given only the cost with a very good farm and very good yields. I had better, perhaps, also say that there is also a good deal of bad farming in New Zealand, and that most of the farmers are only just struggling along, and therefore I am only endeavouring to put before this Commission the very lowest price at which the best farmer, and on the best land, can produce his goods.

Price of corn.

4766. What rate of interest do they pay for their money?—I should think about 6 per cent. I do not know for certain, and therefore I would rather not say. There are a great many farmers in the hands of the Bank of New Zealand, and it is the usual thing for a bank to undertake that sort of business. New Zealand mutton can be produced at 2*d*. per lb. with a considerable profit to the producer. The advantage over English farming in the production of mutton consists in the absence of fly first, the suitability of most of the land, the mild climate, and the large farms—any of you gentlemen who keep sheep know how much better sheep do when they have a great number of changes of land suitable for them—that is the advantage which Mr. Grigg and other large farmers in New Zealand have over our own farmers.

4767. (*Mr. Giffen.*) What part of New Zealand?—On the Canterbury Plain, between the mountains and the sea. A crop of turnips or rape can be produced at considerably less than 20*s*. per acre. The amount of food on a 500-acre paddock thus cropped to be fed off by sheep is something enormous. A paddock in New Zealand is larger than the majority of English farms; taking the cost of mutton at 1½*d*. per lb. and the cost of freight and refrigeration and commission in London at 1·65*d*., the best of mutton can be sold in London at 3·15*d*., without losing money. Dairy produce is very profitable to the New Zealand farmer at present prices.

(*e*.) Manitoba, and the North-West Provinces.

I go next to Manitoba and the North-West of the United States. My investigations in Manitoba led me to the conclusion that wheat could be grown and harvested by farmers accustomed to the country at a cost of 28*s*. per acre, and that an average yield of 20 bushels might be depended upon. The grain, therefore, would cost nearly 1*s*. 6*d*. per bushel delivered to the nearest railway station, and the cost of delivery to the shipping port on the Atlantic or in the St. Lawrence amounts at present to 20 cents a bushel, say 10*d*., making the wheat cost without any profit or

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commission 2*s.* 4*d.* per bushel, or 19*s.* 2*d.* per quarter; but the freight and insurance would add 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* per quarter. Thus the net cost, including freight, and insurance to England would be 21*s.* 6*d.* A farmer living in Manitoba or Dakotah, or any of the North-Western Provinces, would hardly remain there unless he makes a fair profit, and I do not believe that the present price of wheat in England will largely stimulate further production. It is quite a different thing living in Australia and New Zealand, where one seldom sees ice or snow, or living under a temperature below zero. There is a large amount of ranching done, and no doubt a fair export resulting therefrom may be expected in the shape of beef. I feel sure that neither the United States nor the Provinces of Manitoba or Alberta will ever seriously compete with Australia and New Zealand in supplying mutton.

(*f.*) California.

Then I go to the Pacific Coast. California claims to produce nearly 14 bushels to the acre on the average at a cost of 20*s.* or 22*s.* per acre. The freight is about 6*s.* per quarter, and the cost, including freight and insurance to England, and carriage from the farm to the shipping port, including cost of bags, would bring it up to 23*s.* or 24*s.*, cost, freight, and insurance. The present London price of 28*s.* may be sufficient to keep up and perhaps to increase the cultivation. In Oregon a larger yield is obtained, and the average is stated at 20 to 25 bushels. The charges are very little higher than in California, and the production of wheat will probably largely increase even at present prices. The same remarks apply to the Walla Walla wheat.

4768. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Were you in those countries, and when?—I was not through California or Oregon, but I went through all the others in the earlier part of this year. I arrived home on the 25th July, and I went with the sole object of examining into agricultural matters from beginning to end. I wanted to satisfy myself. When I gave evidence before the Duke of Richmond's Commission some of the Commissioners seemed to think I took a good deal upon myself in doubting Messrs. Reade and Pell's report as to the cost of wheat in America. I there gave evidence that what they said could only be imported at 42*s.* could be imported at 35*s.* or 36*s.* I would have gone further, but I took a rather modest view of my own opinion in opposition to such experts as Messrs. Reade and Pell. Some of the Commissioners assumed because I had not been and seen for myself that I was going too far. I happened to know what it could be imported at, because I am the head of a firm which does a very large business in the import of wheat, and has correspondents all over the world, but I may tell you I was very much taken to task on that occasion, because I had not been and seen for myself, and I made up my mind, as I had taken up the question of agriculture rather earnestly, before I spoke positively again I would see for myself what could be done.

Price of wheat in India.

I next come to India, and I think as Mr. Everett is very much interested in the question of silver, perhaps it would be more satisfactory if he would address questions to me on the Indian wheat. I may say that I have not been in India; I was only as far as Ceylon; but I have gathered a good deal of information from the firm, which I believe knows more about these matters than any other firm in the United Kingdom, and that is from the firm of Ralli Brothers in London, who have establishments all over India.

4769. (*Lord Vernon.*) Did you travel in India yourself?—No; I have not been further than Ceylon.

4770. I do not think that this Commission would care to have figures at second hand which really could be obtained from statistics provided elsewhere, and which are open to anybody?—Those statistics that I should give are not generally known.

4771. Then put it as shortly as possible?—The great question is, does the Indian grower consider that he is getting as much for his wheat as he did 20 or 30 years ago. Messrs. Ralli Brothers, who have correspondents at all the points in the interior, and buy more wheat than any other firm in India, in 1888 sent round to their different houses the following question, "Does "the ryot obtain a better or worse price for his "produce now than he did years ago?" That question was answered as follows. I append against each the corresponding gazette price of wheat in the earliest year mentioned by each correspondent. The average price in England for the last six months of 1887 was only 31*s.*

District.	Does the Ryot obtain a better or worse price for his produce than he did years ago?	Over what period does your information extend?	Gazette prices of English Wheat in the earlier date named.
Patna -	Better - -	1878-87	English wheat 1878, 46/5
Jahehgunge -	" - -	1872-87	" 1872, 57/
Buscar -	About same -	1879-86	" 1879, 43/10
Cawnpore -	Perhaps worse -	1876-87	" 1876, 46/2
Jubbulpore -	Probably worse -	1866-87	" 1866, 49/11
Hurda -	Probably better -	1882-87	" 1882, 45/1
Delhi -	Better - -	1877-87	" 1877, 56/9
Meerut -	" - -	1877-87	" 1877, 56/9
Nagpore -	" - -	1877-87	" 1877, 56/9
Sholapore -	" - -	1876-87	" 1876, 46/2
Umritzur -	" - -	1873-87	" 1873, 58/8
Sukkur -	" - -	1877-87	" 1877, 56/9
Ferozepore -	" - -	1868-87	" 1868, 63/9

Exchange value of the rupee.

4772. How do they account themselves for that, that they should have got a better price? I suppose it is from the demand in consequence of the railways being made?—They get a better price mostly from the fact that you can get more rupees for a sovereign than you could formerly; whereas you could only get 10 rupees for a sovereign 20 years ago you can buy 17 rupees for a sovereign now. Therefore you can give to the Indian farmer fully the same price in rupees that he had 20 years ago, notwithstanding the heavy fall in the sterling price in England.

4773. You might give the same but most of them would see better. I do not see how the price would have risen in consequence of obtaining more rupees for a sovereign than they did years ago?—At that time the fall in wheat in England had not been so great as the fall in silver, and therefore they were getting rather more rupees for their wheat than in the previous periods mentioned by Messrs. Ralli Brothers' correspondents.

4774. (*Mr. Everett.*) The essence of the matter, is it not, is that during all the time that the price has been falling lower and lower here they in their own money have been receiving the same price?—The same price. Even up to now they are receiving at least the same price. I have the prices with me for many years.

4775. And owing to the rise in the value of gold they are able to sell their produce in so much less of our money?—Yes.

4776. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What you meant to say, if I understand you, is this: that although the gold price of wheat has fallen very largely in this country owing to the fall in exchange in India the gold price that they obtain now will exchange for as many or more rupees than they obtained before?—So as to leave the rupee quite as valuable to them as 20 years ago.

Indian land tax.

4777. You further mean, I apprehend, that these rupees when they are received by the Indian grower will purchase for his purpose as much of any Indian commodities as they purchased before?—His rent is the same. I think all evidence goes to show that the Indian Government has not raised what is called the land tax, which is really the rent. The rent fixed in India would amount to 5½ per cent. on the gross value of the produce of the soil. You will find this information in the Famine Commissioners' Report, Part II., page 90, presented to Parliament in 1880. The land tax of India has only risen since then by the amount of fresh land brought into cultivation.

4778. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) You did not answer the question as to the purchasing power of the rupee being the same?—I quite agree with Mr. Chaplin.

Wages in India.

4779. (*Mr. Elton.*) Owing to the change in the value of gold and silver, I understand that some years ago a large grower of wheat was making a profit by the sale of wheat from India, because partly the ryot was taking low wages and did not notice the value in the silver?—

Quite so. The wages have had a very slight advance only in some places.

4780. I suppose the wages were 1½d. or 2d. per day, and there was not sufficient movement in that minute market in India for the labourer to make any claim in the advance in wages, whilst at the same time the merchant might be making a large profit owing to the difference in the value of the metals?—I think the merchant has all along got about the same profit, but I believe the wages have risen very slightly.

4781. That is what I was coming to, and as the ryot has found out the margin in profit, I believe, between England and India he is now claiming a share in it?—I have a book of wages here. The evidence goes to show that in most cases wages have slightly risen, but only very slightly, for agricultural wages. Some other wages have risen more. In some places, on the other hand, they have either remained stationary or fallen; but I believe on the whole there has been a slight rise in wages.

4782. But it was consequently noticed in this country, was it not, that the agricultural wages of the ryot did not rise at all for a very long period?—That argument has been used certainly, but I believe there is a slight rise.

4783. Now?—Yes.

Indian land tax.

4784. (*Lord Vernon.*) The land tax is really a sliding scale?—It is a fixed amount, and fixed for 30 years, I think, but the Famine Commissioners, when they made their report, computed what it would amount to as a per-centage on the produce of the land, and they came to the conclusion—I have got their reports here—that it would amount to from 3 to 7 per cent., and they stated the value of produce, and the amount of taxes, and the taxes represent to the value of produce in the aggregate exactly 5½ per cent.; there is a provincial cess which is similar to our local taxation which amounts to another one per cent. Therefore the Indian grower, under British rule, for rates, taxes, and rent, all three combined, only pays 6½ per cent. on the value of the produce of the soil which he grows. The paper currency countries are even more decidedly assisted by a currency bounty than are the silver currency countries.

4785. I do not think it is worth while to go into that?—My object is to give the price of wheat in foreign countries.

Price of wheat and sheep in Argentina.

4786. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Which countries?—Argentina and Russia. With regard to Argentina, there has been lately issued by the Foreign Office a report by Mr. Gastrell, which is a very valuable report indeed. I do not know whether the Commissioners have read it, but I could not put the state of things there in better words than Mr. Gastrell does. That is a published report. There is no doubt that wheat can be imported from the Argentine Republic at 20s., and that the grower of that wheat would think that he was getting a remunerative price. At the present time the price of a sheep at Buenos Ayres is 8s., and buying five sheep for 2l. of British money, the man who sells the five sheep receives 32 dollars for them. It is not likely that he does not appreciate the fact that those dollars are not quite so valuable as they were many years ago, but I fancy he arrives at the conclusion that they will have a good deal more purchasing power than we think, and he is very glad to take them.

4787. Can you show us where that is shown in Mr. Gastrell's report?—Not that particular information about the price of mutton; that is my own information.

Price of Russian wheat.

4788. (*Lord Cobham.*) Is not it necessary to have good wheat to command the highest English price?—The Argentine is fairly good wheat, and it commands as much as good Russian wheat. This wheat would not be worth so much as the English wheat of this last harvest, but generally English wheat is not so good; it would be worth quite as much or more than the average of English wheat. In Russia they have the paper rouble, which is now worth 24½d. I remember when it was worth 38d. in the exchange, and the Russian peasant values the paper rouble exactly as he did before. He is paid his wages, which are very low wages indeed, in these paper roubles. The wages are from 1s. to 1s. 7d. per day in our money at the present exchange, but they would appear more to him.

4789. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Are you aware that it is a fact, which has been quite recently reported to me, that Russian wheat has been sold quite lately in Bristol for delivery in February, March, and April at 22s. 6d. per quarter?—Not first-class Russian wheat. My firm are buying these cargoes every day, and therefore I know. We have bought good Russian wheat at 24s. for shipment at Odessa and Azof for next April and May, which is an investment extending over a good many months.

4790. It was described to me as sound, dry Russian wheat?—Yes, I daresay some of a somewhat inferior quality you have been told about, but not really the best quality. We have bought good Russian wheat at 24s. within a day or two—many thousand quarters.

The Russian rouble.

4791. And you have been able to take that extremely low price owing to the depreciation of the rouble?—Yes. I do not think that they would take the same price if they did not value the rouble quite as high as they used to do. The paper rouble even now is more valued than the silver one.

4792. Is it not based on silver?—They have forgotten what the silver rouble is in Russia, and the paper rouble is positively worth more than the silver rouble, although four or five years ago it was worth less; but the fall in silver has not communicated itself to the paper. I should be a bi-metallist myself if it was not that these paper currencies are not dependent in any way on the value of silver.

4793. Will you continue your remarks about the other countries?—I mentioned Chili, which is much the same as Argentina.

Import duties.

4794. (*Lord Vernon.*) And they are practically the same. In answer to Question 3448 I asked you what remedy you proposed, and you said "Nothing but "protection of some kind." What kind of protection would you propose that could possibly stimulate the growth of English wheat when wheat can be grown in Russia and imported into this country for 24s.?—I should not attempt to make wheat dear. I would rather raise a revenue from moderate import duties, so as to encourage the growth of wheat in England with the proceeds.

4795. What do you mean by moderate duties?—I mean raising a revenue by moderate import duties.

4796. On wheat?—On wheat and other articles, especially flour.

4797. It would have to be a very high duty?—Not necessarily very high. I think we ought to encourage the growth of wheat in this country for political reasons and for our national safety. I think too that we are making a great mistake in not cultivating more corn of all sorts.

Bounty on wheat.

4798. Do you mean you would give a bounty?—Yes, out of a duty charged. I would put a sufficient duty on to make a difference in price, but I would not raise the price excessively, as some propose; and, moreover, I would not place any duty upon the corn coming from the colonies for this reason, that those countries afford a splendid outlet for all our working men to emigrate to and live as comfortably as in our own country.

Farming contracts in Australasia.

4799. (*Mr. Elton.*) Perhaps I missed what you said about New Zealand. Is there a plan in New Zealand in your experience of speculating sometimes; that the whole of the labour of getting crops is done by a gang of agriculturists undertaking to grow the wheat and pay themselves out of the crop?—Payment by piecework is general in Australasia, and it is a mode of labour which is very good, and I believe it will some day be more generally adopted in England. It costs less and more work is done for the money although the daily rate of wages is high.

4800. Does not a band of labourers go to an estate to work it and pay themselves out of the crop?—They will do the ploughing at so much an acre on thousands of acres, and they will do all the shearing of the sheep.

4801. I daresay you have heard of a case. I have heard of one—where they undertook to raise the wheat crop and pay themselves a deferred charge out of the crop when it grows?—I have not heard of that.

4802. You have not heard of a case where a person had a very large rent to pay?—I have not heard of it; but the prices of farming operations I have given are all contract prices.

4803. What you mentioned tended in that direction?—What I mentioned would be only a development of that. There is clearing the bush, and that is also done by contract.

4804. But I suggest a long contract, such as that I have mentioned?—No, I have not heard of it.

Barley growing in the United States.

4805. The one I have heard of turned out disastrously. Can you tell me about the Red River Company, why they do not export their barley? Is there any reason as distinguished between wheat and barley?—There is not much barley grown yet? They are growing barley, but what they do grow goes mostly to Canadian and United States brewers; notwithstanding the United States' duty, I think that the Canadian barley is so much better than that grown in the Union that they import some of it.

4806. Is not there a disagreeable weed that grows with the barley that makes it difficult to get a value for it—an oniony weed?—Garlic—I have not seen it.

4807. No, because it is not exported; it does not come to England at all?—We have had barley from Canada, but it is not an article of regular import.

Indian wheat.

4808. The Indian wheat that you deal in does not stand on the same footing as English wheat; it has to be mixed before it is used?—Nearly all wheat is mixed in England. The Indian is very suitable wheat for mixing with the English, especially when the English crop has more moisture than usual in it.

4809. It is a very hard wheat?—Yes, it is very suitable; both wheats are improved by the mixture, that is to say, the Indian wheat absorbs the moisture of the English wheat, which it lacks itself; and the English wheat gets the benefit of the extra dryness in the Indian wheat.

4810. Therefore it is a suitable article for the mixture of English and Indian wheat, and is an object of great importance in that trade?—Yes.

4811. India you would include in those countries which you would not try the restriction upon?—Certainly. I do not know whether any duty could be put upon silver so as to make the conditions more equal between India and the rest of our colonies. I have proposed that course.

Produce of wheat per acre in California and New Zealand.

4812. The Californian slope, and the best New Zealand bits of land, of course, grow as much wheat to the acre as any land in the world?—I should think they did. I know that in New Zealand there are patches of land which produce 80 and 90 bushels of wheat to the acre.

4813. And so there are some very select patches in California?—I daresay they are equally good.

4814. They are then three or four times better, speaking roughly, than the land outside those selected bits?—Yes; there is a great deal of poor land abroad as well as good land. I have only been telling you what the good land will do when I have spoken of large yields.

4815. But the ordinary arable land in those countries you are speaking of would be more like 12 bushels to the acre?—A great deal of it, and some less than that.

4816. Some of the Western States gave up growing corn when they only produced 11 bushels?—Quite so.

Wheat growing in India.

4817. (*Mr. Everett.*) With regard to India, you were asked if there was any alteration in the rate of wages in India; can you tell me whether the people who grow wheat in India employ labour? Is not the wheat mostly grown by the farmer?—It is mostly grown by the farmer himself without any employment of labour, and therefore the difference in wages is not an important matter.

Rate of exchange with India.

4818. Twenty years ago, that is prior to 1873 in the bi-metallic time, England and India had practically the same money, had they not?—Practically. A rupee was equal to a florin.

4819. Gold and silver were exchanged at a nearly uniform rate?—At the respective prices that we valued them in England.

4820. The gold and silver did not fluctuate to more than a very minute extent?—No.

4821. We had practically the same money, I understand you to say, in India and here; and if it had not been for the dislocation between silver and gold money; that is, if we were in the same place with regard to money as in 1873, Indian wheat could not be sold here now lower than 20 years ago?—Unless the farmer took a good deal less profit now. I consider that he is making at least the same profit as 20 years ago, but if the price of silver went up again he would be making a very much lower price.

4822. That does not follow at all, because if I understand you aright, the price of wheat measured by silver has not altered in the last 20 years appreciably?—It has not, but if silver were back to the previous price of 5*s.* per ounce, the Indian ryot would not get so many rupees for his wheat.

4823. Does he get as many rupees?—He does.

4824. The same as 20 years ago, when silver was at a fixed value with gold, and was worth 5*s.* an ounce? But the silver prices have not altered, and if we had the same money, Indian wheat could not be sold here for any less than it was 20 years ago?—Well, for instance in 1867 the Government statistics give the price of Doodiah wheat from 3 rupees 2 annas down to 2 rupees 12 annas in that year; that is I see the lowest quotation, and the price in 1893 of Doodiah wheat was 3 rupees 4 annas and 9 pice. That is according to the Government returns.

4825. We must take it generally that measured by silver, prices in India have stood still during the last 20 years?—Yes, if you look through this book you will find that that is so. In January last they were rather higher than in January 1867.

4826–7. When the exchange falls the effect is not to add to the price in India, nor for long to add to the merchant's profit, but it finds its effect in a fall in the gold price here?—That is to say, if Indian wheat is a very large article of import it would cause a fall in the price here, but if Indian wheat only takes its fair share of the imports, I imagine that the Indian ryot would be getting a larger profit than he expected during the exchange falling. That is to say, the supply of Indian wheat would not be sufficiently large to affect the price of our whole supply.

4828. But we have the fact from your evidence that prices in silver have stood on the whole steady during the last 20 years, and we have also the fact known to all of us that in this country, measured by gold, prices have been continually falling?—Yes.

4829. And that falling we also know has substantially followed the fall in exchange. The question I wished you to answer was, whether it is not the case when the fall goes further that the effect of that is not to add to the price of the Indian grower, not to add to the profit of the middleman, the merchant, but to enable the merchant to sell that wheat at a lower price in England?—There is no doubt that the fall here has resulted from such circumstances to a great extent, but I could not say that immediately the sterling value of the rupee went down it would make the price of the whole wheat supply over all parts of the world to England lower. The price of wheat in India has varied; in 1890, three years ago, it was 2 rupees and 12 annas, whereas in 1892 it was 3 rupees 7 annas and 6 pice, according to the Government returns.

4830. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) May I ask one question, where are those prices; are they average prices, or from any particular part?—They are average prices. This is for Doodiah wheat from Calcutta. I believe it is an Indian Government price. It is taken from an official report called "Prices and wages in India compiled in the "Statistical Branch of the Financial and Commercial "Department of the Government of India." I do not prefer Government returns myself, I prefer private ones, because the Indian ryot as a rule has a great suspicion of any question that is sent to him by the Government, fearing that the land tax will be raised against him if the circumstances seem to warrant it, and therefore the replies given to an official would probably lack truth more than those given in the course of business.

4831. (*Lord Vernon.*) I suppose that what you mean is that the fall in the rate of exchange has stimulated production more than altered prices in India?—It has just the same stimulating effect on production as it had 20 years ago, when I suppose the price converted into sterling was 15*s.* and 20*s.* per quarter higher, delivered in England.

4832. (*Mr. Everett.*) You will see there is not a rise in price in India, and so there is nothing to stimulate production there; the whole effect of the exchange has fallen upon us?—According to these statistics I think that this year's price in India is quite as high as the average, extending over 15 to 20 years.

4833. So far as you know, is there any evidence that the value of silver in India has fallen at all?—I do not think there is; I believe there is a great deal of evidence to the contrary.

Import duties.

4834. (*Mr. Channing.*) Do you include India with the colonies in your reply that you did not wish to apply protection to the colonies?—I think we ought to treat the colonies as we treat our own country.

4835. But do you include India in your suggestion?—Of course it is one of our dependencies.

4836. That would mean about one-fourth, I understand by the last agricultural returns, of the imported wheat and flour?—No, not so much, India does not send us one-fourth, at least I think not.

4837. The total imports of this country are about 19,000,000 quarters?—Yes. More; over 22,000,000 quarters.

4838. And the imports from India and the colonies are about 20,000,000 cwts.?—Yes.

4839. The question I wanted to base upon that was, what effect would you expect from your moderate duty; would you expect a great expansion of wheat-growing in the colonies and India?—I should expect that all the wheat that the colonies ship would come here, whereas now it does not all come to this country; the colonies now ship a great deal of wheat that goes to other countries.

4840. Do you think that the result would be an acceptable rise in the value to the English farmer?—A moderate rise, not a very perceptible one. Supposing you put on a duty of 5*s.* I do not think that the rise would be more than 2*s.* 6*d.* or 3*s.*

Cost of producing home-grown wheat.

4841. (*Mr. Lambert.*) At what price do you consider wheat could be grown in this country at a profit?—It varies very much in different parts of the country, but I have a statement from a Hampshire farmer that I brought with me. This is heavy Hampshire land, and I daresay that there are many places in England where it could be grown cheaper, but he has sent me the total of the charges that he has to pay. He does not debit himself with rent, and he makes his cost 7*l.* 10*s.* 3*d.*; but I believe wheat can be grown in many parts of the country at considerably less.

4842. I know that. Are these figures reliable?—They are reliable for the part of the country they come from. In all my calculations I have taken what I considered an average cost of the wheat culture in England.

4843. That is what I want; the average?—About 6*l.* an acre would produce the wheat, and thresh it out, and deliver it to the nearest railway station probably.

4844. Is that including rent?—No rent; I do not consider that there is much wheat land in England worth much more than 10*s.* or 12*s.* 6*d.* per acre at the present time. Of course most of it is not worth that; at present prices I think no one could produce it at a profit with no rent at all on most of the land devoted to it.

Import duties; effect on rents.

4845. Presuming that an import duty was placed upon wheat, would it not result in an immediate rise in rents?—I think not; and I will tell you why. The whole rents of the United Kingdom have not followed the price of wheat at all in the past. Of course as regards land that was only suitable for wheat growing, it would be ridiculous for me to say that that land would not get some advance in rent if the growing of wheat was stimulated, and the wheat was saleable at a higher price. But what we have to look at is the whole rent in the country. I do not see why one set of landowners should be ruined, and another set not injured at all. If you take the total rent of England at different periods, you will find that when wheat was very high the rents were not so high as when wheat materially declined. I believe the rents in Great Britain, or England and Wales, at all events, were highest when wheat was about 40*s.* per quarter.

4846. But presuming that the farmers were able to make more profit, would not that result in their paying more rent, owing to the natural competition between them for farms?—I do not think they have got their rents down sufficiently yet in many places. If they went on with something like the same rent as last year's returns, the landowners would be receiving quite as much as they did under protection, except in those soils suited for wheat growing only.

4847. You do not think that rents have been reduced enough to enable the farmer to live?—They have a bad living of it recently.

4848. (*Mr. Elton.*) You are speaking of arable land?—Mr. Lambert knows as much as I do about land in Devonshire, and he knows that a good deal of grass land is not less valuable now than it was years ago.

4849. I quite believe it, but my point is this: presuming that a rise in the price of the article produced took place, that must immediately result in a rise of rent, and it would make no difference to the tenant farmer?—I think the nation, if it was going to give a great sop to the agricultural industry, would have a right to name its terms, so as to prevent a material rise in the rent.

Court for fixing rent.

4850. What terms?—I would have a court of appeal with regard to any advance of rent, and that appeal would go before surveyors who would examine the farm, and see whether it was justified or not.

4851. You have no objection to an outside court?—I have not; that is to say, if it is fairly constituted.

4852. You have no objection to submitting your farm to a fairly constituted and impartial tribunal?—To well-known surveyors of the county in which it is situated, who understand what they are about.

4853. You do not think that it would have any effect upon the relations between landlord and tenant?—I do not think it would have a bad effect.

Bi-metallism.

4854. Presuming that bi-metallism was in force would it affect materially the import of wheat into this country?—I think not. I think if you could get all the world to adopt a silver standard instead of a paper currency, then it would raise the prices all round. But the paper currency countries are more important as regards the import of wheat than the silver currency countries.

4855. You could not have any "paper metallism" or anything like that?—No; I do not think so. Paper has no intrinsic value.

Import duties and alleviation of burdens on land.

4856. How much would you consider ought to be raised to encourage the growth of wheat in this country; have you given attention to this matter?—I do not believe that a duty of 10*s.* per quarter would raise the price sufficiently to encourage it very materially; but it might be done by putting an import duty on and collecting sufficient to take off the burdens which now exist on agricultural lands in this country, which are most iniquitous. I calculate that the burdens of tithe, rates, and taxes, amount to 13 per cent. of the produce of England and Wales. In our colonies all the charges that fall upon the farmer do not amount to 1 per cent. of the produce.

4857. (*Mr. Everett.*) You say rates, taxes, and tithes?—Yes; they amount to 13 per cent. on the produce of England and Wales.

4858. (*Mr. Channing.*) Taking the whole country?—Yes, England and Wales; they are not so large in Scotland or Ireland.

Effect of increased prices.

4859. (*Mr. Lambert.*) If you raise the price of wheat, it would of course raise it to the consumer?—It would in the long run.

4860. Would it be preferable to raise it in the form of an income tax?—That I cannot say. I cannot go into that question. But there is one thing that I have observed, and that is, that the poor have never yet got the full advantage of the low prices that they ought to have got; bread has not gone down as much as wheat has.

Increased foreign consumption.

4861. Do you think that the increase of population in other countries will tend to increase the consumption of agricultural produce?—No doubt.

4862. Do you think that it will materially affect the imports?—I think in time it will, especially in the United States. The increase of population will have some effect, but the quantity of virgin soil is much greater than the increase of population is likely to absorb for a very long time.

Import duties.

4863. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What amount of duty did you think of putting on; was it 5*s.*?—I thought about 5*s.* per quarter would provide a suitable sum.

4864. Have you calculated how much it would provide?—Of course the imports would increase from

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the colonies, and decrease from other parts, and therefore it would not provide a very enormous amount, perhaps 6,000,000*l.* or 7,000,000*l.* on our corn and flour imports at first; I do not remember the exact figures; that would gradually decrease; but I would put an import duty upon everything we import except raw materials.

4865. You have not calculated to what extent the wheat would cease to come from some of those countries, if you put 5*s.* on?—No.

4866. Would not it be prohibitive?—I think they are bound to go on cultivating as long as they get anything like cost price. In Argentina a 5*s.* duty would have very little effect; they would go on paying the 5*s.*

4867. Do you think the result would be a rise in the prices of 2*s.* 6*d.*?—I think it would.

4868. You make it 13*s.* 6*d.* an acre for the rates, taxes, and tithe?—No; I said 13 per cent. on the value of the produce.

Effect of tithes, &c., on the cost of production.

4869. But is it right to take tithe as one of the burdens; is not tithe part of the value of the land?—I simply go on this; that if I have a farm given me in England, and a farm given me in America, I pay a tithe before I produce in the one case and not in the other.

4870. Because you have nine-tenths of the original farm given you in one case, and you have the whole of it given you in the other. But is it not a question of separate ownership; it is not a burden on the land?—I do not want to enter upon that question; I have every respect for the law of the land with regard to tithe, but people have to pay tithe as they have to pay anything else, and therefore there is no good in saying that they have not. I think Dr. Giffen, before the Duke of Richmond's Commission, explained where the burdens came in to be paid by the tenant, that it was just on the verge of land going out of cultivation.

4871. (*Mr. Giffen.*) I should like you to give me a reference?—Certainly; this is it, Question 64,876. "That is the point I was making, that the only cases in which rents, or rates, or tithes, would enter into the question of the cost of production at all would be just those cases where there was a sort of question whether the land would be cultivated at all or not." I quite agree with Dr. Giffen about that. I have a good deal of land myself, which I could leave as it is and get more rent for it as a cattle run than I could by letting it to a farmer; and therefore if a farmer applies to me to take that land, he would naturally have to give what the land was worth for other purposes, and thereby he would be paying the rates, tithe, and taxes, in taking that land for cultivation. That is what you mean, Dr. Giffen, is it not.

4872. I do not think that Mr. Harris should examine me just now. That is a question we must leave?—There are points with regard to the price of wheat upon which I think we have been very much mistaken in this country. Even John Stuart Mill says that the price is always regulated by the most difficult conditions under which the article is grown. That is distinctly negatived by recent years, and I notice that Dr. Giffen, before the Duke of Richmond's Commission, in answering Question 64,840, agreed with Mr. Stuart Mill to this extent, when he used these words—"the price is always regulated by the most difficult conditions under which the article is grown." We must upset that portion of our political economy there is no doubt. There is a great deal founded on that argument in the political economy of Mr. Mill.

4873. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You have had great experience in the corn trade?—Yes, I have been all my life in the corn trade; ever since I was a boy.

Exports of wheat from Argentina.

4874. Can you give me from which of the countries you have named can wheat be sold in the English market at the cheapest price?—At present that is Argentina.

4875. Do you know what the amount of export of wheat is at present?—The export is likely this current year to be nearly 6,000,000 quarters.

4876. What are the total imports of wheat into Great Britain?—About 22,000,000 quarters; rather more than less last year.

4877. It is a considerable proportion of the whole?—Yes.

4878. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You do not mean to say that Argentina is likely to send 6,000,000 quarters to this country?—To all the world it has an available export of 6,000,000 quarters; if no other country can take it it will come here.

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Imports from countries with depreciated currency.

4879. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Can you tell me what proportion of our total wheat imports come to this country under the circumstances that you mentioned, namely, from countries with a depreciated currency?—I have not looked that out carefully, but I think that those countries have the effect of making the prices for the whole, and that is perhaps the answer to that question. I think those currency countries have the effect by their prices of reducing the price of the whole supply.

4880. And you say that it is the fact that their currency is depreciated which enables those countries to take the present low prices in England?—I am sure of it.

4881. Do you think that is a state of things which is likely to continue in the future?—I am afraid it is. It has been a very long time in operation in Russia, and it seems to make no difference.

4882. If it does continue, what do you anticipate will be the effect in this country?—I think we shall continue at these very low prices, and if the premium on gold were to go still higher (in Buenos Ayres it might easily go higher than now), prices might be lower still, otherwise, I think we have got pretty nearly to the bottom of prices, if no other countries obtain these same advantages.

4883. But has it not often been the opinion among gentlemen of experience in this business, like yourself, that we had touched the bottom of prices before?—It has not been my opinion, but I remember that the Chairman of this Commission, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, in a speech before the British Association in 1879, predicted that we were then at the lowest point.

Effect of decline in wheat growing.

4884. What I wanted to arrive at was your opinion as to what will be the effect in this country if this state of things continues or becomes worse upon the wheat industry of Great Britain?—I think that the acreage under wheat must decline still further. There is a certain acreage of land which will grow wheat even against present prices, and produce something to the owners, the productiveness being so great; but there will be a much smaller acreage than is now grown.

4885. But with the exception of the best land that points to the extinguishing practically of the wheat-growing industry in England, does it not?—A very great reduction; a still further reduction of great importance.

4886. Apart from the national question that that would raise what, in your opinion, would be the effect of the cessation of the wheat-growing industry upon agriculture generally in this country?—I think it would intensify the depression in employment. I do not think that wages have gone down so very much, but it would keep up the congestion of the towns to a still greater extent, and I think that the working classes would be highly dissatisfied.

4887. What you mean is that it would affect the rural population in the first place by depriving them of the opportunities of employment?—Yes.

4888. And being deprived of their employment they would have to seek elsewhere for it, and that would add to the congestion of the towns?—Yes.

4889. Does what you say with regard to wheat apply to other articles of produce coming to this country?—Certainly.

Imports of dairy produce and meat.

4890. What articles in particular do you refer to?—All farming articles I mean, even dairy produce, and especially mutton and beef.

4891. You take mutton to begin with?—Yes, especially mutton.

4892. And the price of the mutton to be sent here from those countries?—I do not know whether you were here when I gave the evidence as to New Zealand. I gave the particulars you now ask for then.

4893. You say that even dairy produce could be sent here?—Large quantities from New Zealand and Australia is very suitable; in South Australia they are giving a bounty of 2*d.* a lb. on butter to stimulate the export; and the United States and Canada already send large quantities.

4894. Then if you are right in your anticipations, am I justified in assuming that in your opinion the prospect of British agriculture is very grave?—Very grave indeed. I have been saying so for a long time.

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Reduction in rents.

4895. On the best lands that you speak of I suppose the reduction of rents or a cessation of rent might enable our growers of wheat to compete with the growers of wheat in the countries you speak of, even under the present circumstances?—I think there is a fair acreage that is so fine that it would compete even under present conditions, especially if you allow the sale of the straw, or a portion of the straw I will say—a man can hardly be allowed to sell the whole.

4896. But on the average on the poorer lands no reduction of rent would have that effect?—I think not; if you gave the land to the farmer he would lose money in producing wheat.

4897. And the average farms and the poorer lands are the very great majority of lands in this country?—Certainly.

4898. Do you agree with the evidence that has been given that in many cases the reductions of rent have been very great?—Very great indeed, and looking at the state of things I think that the landowners have behaved remarkably well to their tenants; I have not a word to say against landowners, except a few of them.

Catch crops.

4899. Are you able from your experience of agriculture to suggest to the Commission the growth of any other kinds of produce as substitutes to meet this very serious competition from other countries?—I do not think we grow enough catch crops in England.

4900. What do you mean by catch crops?—Vetches and that sort of thing, which might be made into good ensilage for instance; tillage might be a little helped by that means.

4901. But that would only be to a very limited extent?—I should think not to a large extent; I am trying it myself, that is why I mentioned it. I think there are many other parts of the country which would grow crops of that kind.

4902. Would you look to that as at all able to take the place of the production of wheat and mutton and beef?—It might help the production of beef and mutton but it would not replace the tillage of wheat by any means; besides mutton and beef are nearly as bad as wheat is just now.

Remedies to alleviate depression.

4903. Well then, that being the case, do I understand that you have any remedies to suggest, and if so what are those remedies?—I propose a duty on imports, and to take all the taxation off agricultural land, and if necessary to give the farmer a bounty so that he should produce corn of all sorts; and I believe it is absolutely necessary to produce wheat at home. My interests are that wheat should go out of cultivation and then we should import all the more.

4904. That is because of your business?—Yes, my business. We would like to import all the wheat that is consumed.

4905. Then your own personal interest would be very much against the remedy that you suggest?—No doubt it would. At all times our interest would be that land should go out of cultivation and go to grass.

4906. Upon what kind of imports would you propose a duty; are you limiting the proposition to agricultural articles or all imports?—I should say everything; a duty on all manufactured goods, and everything that competed with home industry except the raw material for manufacture. I would not tax wool or maize; those are the only agricultural products I would leave out.

4907. And in addition to that you would take what you describe as all the burdens off land, and if necessary to give a bounty to the growers of wheat?—I would propose a bounty on tillage, to compensate owners of land for those burdens. It is exceedingly difficult to interfere with the tithe, which is a claim which has been in existence quite as long, if not longer, than the claim of the landowner himself; and the very difficulty of that makes me suggest a compensating allowance to the tiller of the soil, which will have the effect of making tillage profitable, and thus drawing labour to the soil.

4908. Generally speaking, those are the remedies which you recommend for the existing depression in agriculture?—Yes.

4909. And without those remedies, do I understand you to be of opinion that a continuance or an aggravation of that depression is what must be expected?—Certainly a continuance; I hope no aggravation, I am sure.

Duty on barley.

4910. Have you ever considered the question of a duty on foreign barley?—I should put a heavier duty upon the heavy barleys, and a lighter duty on the lighter barleys, because the lighter barleys are used by the cattle feeders, and the heavier barleys are only used for malt.

4911. Would an increase in the price of barley enable the growth of barley, to any material extent, to take the place of the growth of wheat?—Barley land is barley land, and wheat land is wheat land, that is what I have found. I have always found that there is a limited amount of barley land that will grow really good barley.

4912. So far as you are aware there is no very great opening for a large increase in the growth of barley?—Not of the finer quality; you may grow the common barley on a larger acreage.

Small holdings.

Rents.

4913. (*Mr. Little.*) I should like to ask for some particulars of the small holdings that you spoke of. Can you give us the rent of them?—From 5*s.* per acre up to 2*l.* 10*s.* per acre.

4914. Five shillings would be moor land?—Pretty nearly; enclosed moor land.

4915. But brought into cultivation by the occupiers?—Some of them have brought it into cultivation, and others keep it as a run for cows.

4916. How does the rent for those small holdings compare with the rent of farms in the neighbourhood?—It is exactly the same; what a surveyor would value it at.

4917. Do the rents include dwelling-houses?—No, they are let separately.

4918. Are buildings included?—Buildings are added where required at a very low rate of interest. I do not think I get more on the average than 3 or 4 per cent.

4919. The rents do not include the rent of the dwelling-houses?—No, they are charged separately.

4920. It is easy to compare the value of naked land, but the moment you get dwelling-houses and buildings included it is extremely difficult to compare it?—It is extremely difficult; people do not know how much those buildings cost.

4921. That is frequently an element of confusion when people are comparing the rents of small and large holdings?—It is an element of great confusion.

Condition of small holders.

4922. Mr. Bear gives an account of your small holdings in a book that has been recently published?—Yes.

4923. And he took a very favourable view of the position of the small holders?—I think he did.

4924. Rather more favourable than your evidence the other day conveyed?—Yes, I think he did.

Small holders and outside employment.

4925. I think you said that they had done very well, but their condition was not so good now?—In the list which I have just handed in I have put a cross against certain names of those who are more or less dependent upon wages; and if the tillage of land becomes utterly unprofitable in England those men would probably have to leave the neighbourhood.

4926. The point that I wished to make was this: that a number of them were dependent upon wages for their success, and that the laying down land to pasture must have diminished the power of earning wages?—Quite so.

4927. And in consequence many of them would not be able to hold on?—I am not prepared to say that they will have to leave at once; I am improvising a considerable amount of extra work on my estate with the object of keeping them going; but if that failed as well as the tillage land they would have to leave undoubtedly; but I hope to keep the experiment on longer yet.

4928. The change in cultivation would jeopardise the position of the small holders?—It would very much.

4929. They depend to a considerable extent on wages?—Those I have marked depend almost entirely upon wages.

4930. (*Lord Cobham.*) What sized holdings are you speaking of?—420 acres amongst 25 holders.

4931. Are the holders of 40 acres dependent upon wages?—I think when you are going to establish small holdings you would not get up to 40 acres at first. I established those holdings on a small scale, and the holders gradually added to their land as they got on. On the first establishment of these small holdings a labouring man of the neighbourhood would take what he could reasonably manage for the benefit of his family, and which would not materially interfere with the work of the farm if he was engaged on day work.

Cost of production in Australia.

4932. (*Mr. Clay.*) You have given us some very important statements about the increase of production in Australia and different parts of the world; are not those exceptional cases?—I said that I believed that there were 50,000,000 acres still under the bush in Australia, which has sufficient rainfall to be treated in the same manner. Even when Sir Charles Dilke wrote his book, he calculated the cost of clearing land at 10*l.* an acre—it looks as if it would cost 10*l.* an acre, but by this ring-barking and burning they can do it for 10*s.* per acre or even less; and I expect millions of acres will be cleared and cultivated.

4933. Have they been able to pay rent or mortgages upon the property at the price at which they can sell wheat?—A great deal of property is not mortgaged at all. It is taken on a very low rent from the Government. Some is bought at from 1*l.* to 2*l.* an acre. I daresay there are some heavy mortgages. Of course the Australians have been paying a good rate of interest, but on 1*l.* or 2*l.* an acre it does not amount to very much as a rent.

4934. What they do pay in the shape of rent is to the State?—In some of the colonies there is a great deal of land let by the Government, but I think most of the Governments prefer selling it outright. A good deal of the South Australian land is let at 2*l.* per square mile, that is 640 acres for 2*l.* a year; but that is under a deficiency of rainfall, and that land would not be suitable for growing wheat; at all events it would be very uncertain and precarious.

Drought in Australia.

4935. In Queensland is not a drought a very important factor in realising the money out of the land?—The drought overtakes them when there is not sufficient rainfall, and it is very troublesome all over Australia at times. It is a very troublesome thing for the sheep in New South Wales, but wheat is a plant that will stand drought against anything else.

4936. Both for wheat and for cattle and sheep, water is a very important element?—It is a very important element, but they can always make storage places. It is the fault of the Australians that they have not supplied themselves with sufficient storage places.

4937. Although Australia has been prosperous for many years, when these droughts come it causes ruin amongst the farmers?—It has in the past, but I think it has been largely owing to want of precaution on the part of the farmers.

4938. That is a very dangerous state of things, is it not?—Very dangerous for the sheep.

4939. Is not that a thing to calculate upon as a basis as to whether it is profitable or not to cultivate wheat?—I think it is a good country for the growth of wheat undoubtedly. Wheat is not a plant that requires that great amount of rainfall that would be necessary for grass and it is not grown at the same season of the year. The sheep will starve in the middle of the summer, and that is the time when the grain is being harvested. The rainy season always comes in the winter. It is in the summer that the sheep starve; in the autumn you till the wheat and you get the benefit of the rainy season.

Wheat growing in America.

4940. Regarding wheat in America, you said that the wheat farmer had made it profitable?—Up to recently undoubtedly it has been profitable.

4941. The American farmer has been making money?—Yes.

4942. In wheat growing?—Yes.

4943. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Up to when?—Up to two or three years ago—it has been a fair living.

Mortgages on American land.

4944. (*Mr. Clay.*) Have not the mortgagees lost their money who have lent it on the land?—It is monstrous to lend money on those farms for more than five or six years. A good deal of the land is run out in five or six years; and if you lend money expecting to have interest for 50 years, the man who farms wheat will go on producing crops of wheat until the land is exhausted, and then he moves away and the gentleman who has lent the money may go and seek for it. I am not surprised that in a great many cases they have foreclosed.

Rent in America.

4945. I am not questioning the absurdity of the Englishman lending his money, but I will ask you this; can the American farmer pay rent out of his land at the present prices?—In some places, yes, and in others, no.

4946. Is it a rule?—I should think two-thirds of them can pay the rent very well, and the others perhaps are in difficulties with the present prices. There is no doubt that those who can only produce 10 or 11 bushels per acre must have the greatest possible difficulty in paying any rent.

4947. I asked that question because I made a report in the State of Iowa on 60 to 70 landlord tenants, and found that 90 per cent. of them were not able to pay interest on their remaining mortgages?—Yes, that is the fault of the whole system in those countries that they farm exhaustively, and when the man comes down to making no profit out of his land, he generally takes advantage of the mortgagee.

4948. But this farming is the same as in England and Scotland, and most of them are Scotchmen farming with the same rule and not exhausting at all; and at the price of wheat they have been utterly unable to meet any interest on the money in the shape of rent?—I have not seen those farms. I did not know that there was much farming on the rotation system in the western States of America.

Catch crops.

4949. What do you mean by saying that the tenant farmer should grow catch crops; do you think that that would meet the difficulty?—I do not think that it would—but it is a suggestion.

4950. Do you think that catch crops would in any way enable the farmers to get out of the difficulty?—I think it would help the farmers a little.

4951. To what extent?—Very little.

4952. I should think you are right?—But it is a suggestion at all events.

4953. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Have you carried it into effect on your own holding?—Yes.

Taxation in foreign countries.

4954. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Do I understand you to represent that there are no taxes on land, imperial or local, in New South Wales?—Yes.

4955. And that in the other countries that you have referred to, in the Colonies and America there are also no taxes upon land?—I consulted the Compendium of the Census of the United States, and by eliminating the towns and so forth, in some of the more western States I found the amount of taxes came to about 3 per cent. on the produce of the soil. Our Colonies are much less. In Manitoba I met a farmer with 240 acres, who was paying 16 dollars a year. If the produce of that farm was worth 400*l.* a year that would be less than 1 per cent.

4956. But you have no exact figures about taxation; you have not inquired into that specially, have you?—Yes, I have gone into that particularly, and in New Zealand too they have a graduated tax, and on large farms like Mr. Grigg's the taxation is rather heavy.

4957. In New Zealand the taxation is rather heavy?—The taxation of very large farms. All small farms are exempt or very nearly exempt from all Government taxation. A small farm is considered to be 640 acres of good land, or 2,000 acres of second-class land. This 640 acres is sold by the Government at 1*l.* per acre; the buyer is exempt from taxation up to 500*l.*; and there is no taxation upon improvements, a very important point, and a point that we ought to adopt in England. There is no taxation whatever upon improvements either in New Zealand, or South Australia, or Victoria. There is none now on improvements in New Zealand even on a large farm. When I was in New Zealand I had a long interview with Mr. Ballance the Premier. I endeavoured to show him that improvements should not be taxed because large owners were then paying a taxation on their improvements minus only 3,000*l.* exemption, and I showed him how very seriously it acted against the outlay of money, and he promised me in the next session that a Bill should be brought in exempting all improvements; he died before he had time to fulfil the promise, but the Bill was brought in and I believe all improvements are now exempt in New Zealand, therefore the taxation of land remains at the rate of one penny in the pound upon the original value of 1*l.* per acre, unless some outside circumstances raise the value of that particular holding.

4958. In what way is the local expenditure in a place like New Zealand and New South Wales met?—In New South Wales the Government tax nothing, the only local tax is for killing rabbits, for which the farmers make a voluntary tax upon themselves. It is a very important question for the farmers that the rabbits should be killed. I stayed with a man in New South Wales who had 40,000 acres, and he told me that that was the only tax he had to pay, about 20*l.* a year.

4959. For the purpose of exterminating rabbits?—Yes.

4960. But at the same time, the Government in New South Wales get a good deal of income out of the land?—They sell the land—the land belongs to them, and they are constantly selling it and getting rents; they either sell it or get the rents.

4961. There is nothing that you call taxation—the Government gets what is called rent?—Rent, yes but very small rents compared with what we pay in England.

4962. But still there is something of that sort?—I should call it rent, because a man can either buy the land or pay the rent. I should hardly call it a tax.

4963. But if rates themselves are in the nature of rent, I do not see that it makes much difference?—Well, the man can take possession of the land as soon as he gets the money and then it is his own freehold, and he does not pay any taxes. As soon as it is his own freehold he has no taxes.

4964. With regard to the United States, is it not the case that there is a very considerable local revenue in the United States very largely arising from taxes upon property including land?—No doubt; but the property is valued in a very careless manner, and a great advantage is given to the native owner of agricultural land, and to the farmers.

4965. If my memory serves me aright, I think the local revenue in the United States amounts to something like 70,000,000*l.* or 80,000,000*l.* sterling per annum?—I think you are wrong in that.

4966. Well, it is very considerable. Of course, that includes the local revenue from town as well as agricultural places?—From Excise, probably also.

4967. No, I speak of the local revenues, the taxes upon property; I do not think any Excise taxes are raised for local purposes?—Perhaps not,—personal property is taxed there you know.

4968. I know it is supposed to be taxed, but it is not. The property which they can tax is real property which cannot run away?—There is, of course, a great deal of real property taxed, as well as personal.

4969. You will find a great deal to that effect. I wish to know whether you have gone into the subject very minutely, or not?—I took the exact taxes that a certain State paid. You will find full particulars in the Compendium of the Census for 1880, you can get the exact amount of taxation in States, and I took a certain State, mostly devoted to agriculture, and I took off a certain per-centage of what I considered would belong to the towns. The taxes which fell only upon the towns are given separately from those which fall upon the State; those falling upon the State include towns also, but the towns have to pay taxes for many things that the country districts would not have to pay for.

4970. But they have county taxes for the administration of justice, and things of that kind?—There are such taxes no doubt, but all of them are lumped together in the Compendium of the Census. The value of the crops is also given for each State. Taking some account of extra receipts from cattle, I found the taxation amounted to 3 per cent. on the farmers' receipts calculated in the manner I have indicated. I took one-fourth part of the whole as belonging to the towns.

4971. The common rate of taxes I believe is 3·3 per cent., or thereabouts, on the value of the property assessed?—I went my own way about it, and I took it upon the value of the produce. What the farmer has to look to is, how much his produce is taxed; if his produce is taxed heavily, it goes against the production of it; but if it is only lightly taxed, it does not make much difference.

Imports of dairy produce and meat.

4972. You said that you think mutton is likely to be exported in a large quantity, and also dairy produce from New South Wales?—I think so.

4973. Are you quite sure about the mutton?—Yes, New South Wales has more sheep than any other country in the world.

4974. I was led to understand in New South Wales two or three years ago that the quality was so inferior that they were not able to send it?—Up to recently they had only bred the merino breed of sheep, because of the price of wool; the trade in wool has been the principal trade in New South Wales up to quite recently, and now wool is so low in price, that they are forced to go into a different breed of sheep, and these different breeds are being imported and crossed with the merino quite rapidly. I received a letter two or three days ago, saying that my friend who owns the 40,000 acres was preparing 5,000 wethers for the London market, and many more will do the same. It is a new departure, and there is scarcely any limit to its increase.

4975. That is what I wish to bring out, because that is a new fact within the last year or two?—Yes. That land is quite as capable of breeding sheep and competing with us in mutton as in the wool of the merino sheep.

4976. I understood that the want of moisture was a great obstacle, apart from other obstacles?—The want of moisture in the districts of New South Wales and Queensland to which I allude is not so great as it is in South Australia, not anything like it.

4977. But as compared with New Zealand?—As compared with New Zealand, there is no doubt a want of moisture in New South Wales, New Zealand is very moist.

4978. I was speaking of New South Wales?—I think that New South Wales will be a large exporter of mutton—very large in time. The storage of water has not been attended to in the past; it is more attended to now.

Sheep farming in New Zealand.

4979. With regard to New Zealand mutton, do you think that that will continue to increase in quantity?—I think it will be very large indeed.

4980. How many sheep have they now?—I think 18,000,000.

4981. How many sheep could New Zealand support?—Double that number. New Zealand is as large as Great Britain.

4982. But is not the land pretty well occupied all over New Zealand?—No.

4983. What part of New Zealand is not occupied?—A great deal of it. There are 10,000,000 acres belonging to the Maories that has hardly come under cultivation at all.

4984. That is in the North Island, is it not?—That is in the North Island; and there is a great deal of the uncultivated up land which will hold sheep. I consider that in New Zealand the land is quite as good, and some a great deal better than the land of England, and ultimately it will hold as many sheep as England, or perhaps more.

4985. Do you hold that they could support about double the number of sheep in New Zealand?—New Zealand is not so suitable for beef as for mutton, and nearly all the land is suitable for sheep—very little of it is unsuitable for sheep.

Wheat exports from Russia.

4986. I think Mr. Clay has put some questions to you upon this; but I should like to ask you with regard to other countries than the United States, whether it is not the case that Russia, for instance, is sending wheat at prices which are not remunerative in Russia?—I cannot say whether they are remunerative or not; it comes in enormous quantities; and they get higher prices than would appear because they are satisfied with the paper rouble in payment.

4987. But is not the Russian Government using various expedients to keep the market?—They have lent the money, and guaranteed the banks for enabling the farmers to carry on their crops.

4988. So that to some extent there is some foundation for it?—Yes.

4989. So that there is depression not merely in agriculture here but there?—Undoubtedly there is depression in prices even with them. Wheat can be grown in so many different parts of the world; it leaves no profit in many places although the land is suitable for the cultivation. The prices are lower or appear lower in some cases than in others, and in some the farmer cannot live. I have only endeavoured to put before you the cost of the operation of growing wheat under various conditions.

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4990. Take the cost of the operation at the lowest and the sales under the best conditions, would not you say that the average is quite as good?—The instance I gave in New Zealand was the best farm I have seen anywhere, I consider. I do not wish to frighten the farmers in England by suggesting that the cost is everywhere so low.

Wheat growing in India.

4991. With regard to the question of Indian wheat, you say that, so far as the rupee is concerned, the Indian producer gets as good a price now as what he got 20 years ago?—Yes.

Railway extension in India.

4992. What I should like to put to you is this: India sends us so much more wheat now than it did 20 years; what is the change that has enabled India to do that?—Before 20 years ago they had only inferior means of sending the wheat here, and now the railways have been made it has largely altered the conditions, and wheat is shipped with greater facilities as to freight, and that also has extended the wheat growth.

4993. Then the real change is the extension of railways as far as India is concerned?—That is a very important point in the extra production, because of course a certain district of land might have been so far removed from a railway that it would not pay to grow wheat at all.

4994. It is not merely the fall in the gold price, which operates it, is assumed disadvantageously to other producers, but it is the extension of railways in India?—And the low freight as well. You see the low freights make a very considerable difference there. These circumstances, together with the extraordinary fact of their getting rather a higher price in rupees, have helped to increase their export.

Effect of appreciation of gold on wages in England.

4995. Then with regard to the difference in the price in India in rupees and the money price of wheat in English gold I should like to ask a question whether it is not the case that the real wages of labour in England have increased in the last 20 years. I am not speaking of the money wages, but of the value of food and clothing and other things that the labourer gets?—I have a workman on one of my farms who was there 50 years ago. He lived in the house 50 years ago as a farm servant; the farmer gave him all his food and gave him 15*l.* a year. I have some men in the house now living with my hind or manager; and they live in the same way, getting all their food and from 12*l.* to 15*l.* a year. In that case there has been no rise in wages; but where I employ men outside, who are living in cottages near at hand, I give them 12*s.* per week. Those men used at that time to work for 8*s.* or 9*s.* a week. There is therefore a rise in that case, and the rise in that case has been caused by the necessity under which the men labour of sending the children to school.

4996. I am afraid that is going rather away from the point of my question. I am rather taking the time 20 years ago, and your evidence, as to the money wages and agricultural wages compared with a period 20 years ago, is that they are about the same now, or just from 10 to 15 per cent., less in money. Is that a statement with which you would agree?—I do not think that my wages are any less than they were 20 years ago.

4997. And being paid in money, as far as they are paid in money, and the purchasing power of gold having risen, the labourer here gets more than he did 20 years ago?—It is not everything that is cheaper. One of my men was telling me that he paid 14*s.* 6*d.* for a pair of boots, and he used to give for the same kind of boots 9*s.* 6*d.*

4998. Has not the purchasing power of gold increased?—I think generally it has, but there are a great many exceptions.

4999. Because I think that is what Mr. Everett was driving at, that the purchasing power of gold has increased?—I believe the wages of mechanics and artisans have increased considerably, but I doubt whether the average wages of a farm labourer have increased nearly as much.

Comparison between wages in England and India.

5000. Assuming that the real wages of labour in this country have increased perhaps 20 to 25 per cent. in the last 20 years—the real wages—would it not be the case that the English farmer is disadvantageously placed as compared with the Indian farmer, because he has really got to pay his outdoor labourers 20 or 25 per cent. more—he pays the labourer in sovereigns which have so much more purchasing power?—There is no doubt that as compared with the Indian farmer wages go very much against him because of course the wages of the latter have not risen materially.

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5001. Supposing the purchasing power of the sovereign had not increased, but that the real wages of the labourer in the last 20 years in this country had increased, would not the effect on the English farmer be exactly the same as what is alleged now, that he would be placed at a disadvantage compared with the Indian farmer?—Of course the wages that he pays his men is a very distinct charge upon his industry; there is no doubt about that. No one could get out of that question.

5002. Is it not the case that in 1850 and 1870 when prices rose rather than fell, there was at the same time a great rise of wages and income all over the country; now between 1870 and the present time we have had no rise in wages; you have had them rather stationary, or in agriculture slightly falling?—Perhaps.

5003. But you have had a much greater fall in the price of commodities, and therefore the labourer is very much better off even now than he was then. The question I am putting is this: Supposing the price of commodities had not changed further to produce the same state of things now, you would not have had a rise in the money wages of labour?—I expect you would have had some rise.

5004. It is not the difference in money between India and this country which places the English agriculturist at a disadvantage, but it is the fact that during the last 20 years you have had the rise of the real wages in England, and not a rise of the real wages in India?—I do not quite agree with you in that. I think that wages only form a portion of the cost of production. The cost of production is not made up entirely of wages; it is made up by labour-saving machines and so forth as well, and also by various other expenses. Rent has probably gone down in this country a great deal more than wages have risen.

5005. Still the labour is a material element?—A material element; but the men who live in the house on my farm, and who are kept by the manager of the farm, receive exactly the same wages as they did 50 years ago.

5006. Still I am putting the case quite generally, not with reference to particular experience, but with reference to the general facts which have occurred?—You will find that a number of the agricultural labourers do live in farmhouses throughout the country, especially in a county like ours—Devonshire.

5007. Would you say that the scale of living is quite the same now as it was 20 years ago?—They live just the same in the farmhouse, but not in the cottages—I think they will live better in the cottages now.

5008. Then you suppose there is a rise in wages outside your house, and no corresponding rise inside?—I think so, for this reason: I think that previously all the children of the men who lived in the cottages earned small wages, and therefore the labourers' family altogether did not earn so much less than they do now, whereas now the children are compelled to go to school, and the labourer finds it necessary to get more for his own labour.

5009. He does get more then?—He does get more.

5010. That is just the point; there has been a rise of labour in this country, and there has been no corresponding rise in India?—There has been a small rise in India.

5011. The question is whether that would not have had the same effect apart from the change in money upon which so much stress has been laid?—I do not think it would have the same effect, it is not a sufficient quantity.

Import duties.

5012. I do not think it will be necessary to go into the question of protection, but for the sake of making it clear I should like to ask whether you propose to confine import duties to articles of food and manufactured articles, excluding simply what you call raw materials?—Yes.

5013. And you think that a strict division can be made between raw material and other articles?—I think it could. There might be some little difficulty, for you must have experts to find out where a little injury is done, and how it can be remedied.

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5014. Would not there be very great difficulties?—I think the advantages would far counter-balance the disadvantages and difficulties.

5015. But I am speaking of the doing of it all?—I think it could be perfectly easily done, just as they do it in other countries.

5016. The French tax some raw materials and exempt others?—They manage it somehow, and I do not see why we should not when all other nations in the world can do it.

5017. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) I think you are the head of a firm of corn merchants in Liverpool?—London and Liverpool.

Commercial gambling.

5018. Would you tell the Commissioners whether there is a custom in the corn trade known as a system of options and futures?—That is especially so in America.

5019. But it is this country I am speaking of?—It is not widely spread; it is done in Liverpool, but not very largely. In America it is done enormously.

5020. It is asserted that a very large proportion of contracts for wheat never have actual wheat tendered against them. Would that be at all correct?—No, I think not. There is some portion of the wheat which never has a tender against it. My own business is a very genuine one in that way. We simply buy and sell cargoes of corn on commission.

5021. Such a system would tend to reduce the price, would it not?—I think it would have the opposite effect, for this reason, that a farmer has the opportunity of selling wheat forward against his crops, and I think it would help the farmer rather than not. At the same time, I do not believe, that unless farmers gained something by forward sales, it would have the remotest effect on prices.

5022. Then the system does not prevail to any great extent, and if it did prevail, you say it would have the opposite effect?—It does not prevail to that great extent to which it is carried in the United States. I am sure in the United States they sell 20 quarters where we sell one in that way; it does exist in Liverpool especially, but I do not think that it makes any difference in price.

Court for fixing rent.

5023. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) In the course of your evidence you expressed an opinion that there should be some authority to come between the landowner and the tenant?—I would rather call it a Court of Appeal. If there was an advance of rent, a surveyor of the county should be called in, or at any rate the farmer should have the power of calling him in, as is the custom now in settling between the outgoing tenant and the incoming tenant, but the sitting tenant is the real person to consider—the sitting tenant is more to be considered than the outgoing and incoming tenants.

5024. But I want to know as regards the incoming tenant?—Whether his rent should also be subject to appeal?

5025. Are you of opinion that generally speaking in England or Great Britain, the landlords and tenants cannot settle their own business, and that it requires a Land Court to appeal to?—I think there are very few landlords and tenants who cannot settle their own business, but there are some, and it is no hardship, to make the bad landlord do what a good landlord does.

5026. Therefore it is exceptional?—Yes. I would not establish land courts unless it was decided to give some great advantage to agriculturists. I would not establish them under the present circumstances. Supposing that Parliament decided to reduce the burdens materially on agriculture, and give some bonus by which arable agriculture would be stimulated, then I would have a court of appeal as a guarantee to the nation that the landlord could not seize that which was intended for the tenant and labourer, or at all events could not seize more than his fair proportion.

5027. (*Lord Cobham.*) Would you have confidence in umpires by popular election as has been suggested?—No, I should leave it to the county council.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. G. Murray.

Mr. Gilbert Murray called and examined.

5028. (*Chairman.*) You are a land agent, residing at Elvaston Castle in Derbyshire?—Yes.

5029. What extent of properties do you manage?—About 20,000 acres.

5030. All under Lord Harrington?—Yes.

5031. Do you manage for any other landowners besides?—Only small properties.

5032. Has the property in that district all suffered severely from depression?—It has suffered from low prices.

Reductions of rent.

5033. Has there been considerable reduction in rent?—Yes.

5034. What have the reductions amounted to?—20 to 25 per cent.

5035. Are those permanent reductions, or only temporary?—They are permanent reductions.

Character of cultivation.

5036. What is the general character of the cultivation, is it grass land?—A good deal of it is grass land.

5037. Are there some arable farms?—They are mixed farms.

5038. But largely pasture?—Yes, grazing dairy land.

Demand for farms.

5039. With that reduction of rent have you found it possible to get tenants for the land?—I have no difficulty in letting them.

5040. Is there a demand for farms in the district?—Yes.

5041. And with that reduction the farms are taken up, are they?—Yes.

5042. Have you got men with sufficient capital to take the farms?—Yes.

5043. But you have no difficulty in letting the farms?—There is a little difficulty about capital.

5044. Do you find greater difficulty in respect to the large holdings than the small ones?—No. I think the large farmers are the best; we have no really large farms, nothing over 400 acres.

5045. What is the average acreage in your district?—About 200 to 250 acres.

5046. Therefore you have no really very large farms?—No.

5047. But farms between 350 and 400 acres. Do you find that the tenants are prepared to take them with capital?—Yes.

5048. Then I presume that in your opinion the reductions of rent have been sufficient?—Yes, up to now.

Decrease of arable land.

5049. Has the growth of wheat in your district been abandoned?—No.

5050. Has it been reduced considerably?—Yes, it has been reduced, but not to a very great extent; Derbyshire never was a wheat-growing county; the quantity of wheat is only about 17,000 acres, so that the wheat growing is very small.

5051. In the whole of the county?—Yes.

Condition of agriculture.

5052. The depression in agriculture has not reached the point in your county of causing the land to go out of cultivation?—No.

5053. Or of seriously impeding the letting of farms?—No; mixed occupations are mostly in demand at the present time—mixed with a certain proportion of tillage land—not altogether grass.

5054. You are prepared to suggest remedies, but those are remedies for other parts of the country rather than your side?—Rather for the whole country, I should suggest.

Rates.

5055. What are your suggestions?—Well, the question of rates is one very important matter.

5056. What do you suggest there?—I should like to see all rates merged in income tax, and collected in one sum.

5057. And spread over the whole country?—Yes.

5058. Do you consider that the local rates should be divided between the owner and occupier?—I should, if you go on on the same system that we are going on now.

5059. If the system of local rates is maintained, then, in your opinion, the rates should be divided between landowner and tenant?—Yes.

5060. But you would prefer some general system of taxation for taxing all property over the country?—Yes.

5061. Would not that involve getting rid of local management to some extent?—To some extent. My point is to spread taxation over much larger bases. There are some things not taxed at all at present to local rates.

State loans for carrying out improvements.

5062. Then I see you think that money might be lent by the State for improvements on property?—Yes.

5063. What is your recommendation there?—I should recommend 3 per cent. or 3½ per cent. at the outside. That would be quite sufficient.

5064. Are there a considerable number of improvements in your county which might be made if capital was lent by the State?—Yes.

5065. Are we to take it that the properties are in want of improvements in that respect?—There is a certain amount of improvements, the extension of stock breeding and feeding, which entails very considerable extra outlay on buildings, and there are still some lands undrained.

5066. Is there a great deal undrained?—There is some; and cottages are wanted too.

5067. And there are covered yards and barns required?—Yes; hay barns and covered yards.

5068. You think in consequence of the reduction of rents landlords are unable to meet that expenditure, is that the case?—Yes; and you might let them have money at a cheaper rate.

5069. Do you think much might be done in that respect?—Since I have been at Elvaston, 26 years, I have spent 40,000*l.* on 6,000 acres in buildings and drainage entirely out of income.

5070. (*Lord Vernon.*) Is that apart from reductions?—Yes.

5071. (*Chairman.*) On that one estate?—On that one estate of 6,000 acres.

5072. How many years?—26 years.

5073. Then on that property is there much remaining to be done?—Very little.

5074. But it is in respect of large properties in the neighbourhood that you speak?—Yes.

Improvement of stock.

5075. You think that greater attention should be directed to the improvement of stock on farms?—Certainly.

5076. Is there room for that?—Great room.

5077. Has anything been done on the estate which you manage in that direction?—Yes; there has been something done more in the way of horse breeding. Lord Harrington is a horse breeder, and keeps several stallions for the use of his tenants, both in Cheshire and Derbyshire, at a very low fee.

5078. Have the farmers benefited in that direction?—I think they have.

System of cropping.

5079. With regard to tillage lands, do you consider that the rotation of crops should be extended?—I do.

5080. What would be the effect of that?—It would decrease the cost of labour, and I think without lessening the produce. I think quite as much might be grown upon a lessened area, as there is now on the greater area.

5081. Has that been done on your estate at all?—We are giving the tenants a pretty free hand in the way of rotations. We do not confine them to fixed rotations, or the four-course system, or anything of that kind.

5082. They have availed themselves of that?—Some of them. It is coming more into use I think.

Protection.

5083. What is your opinion with regard to protective tariffs?—We do not want protection.

5084. You do not want it?—No.

5085. You consider that the value of feeding stuffs is very great to the farmers?—Yes, we are very much larger buyers than sellers of cereal produce, and the lower prices are certainly of great benefit to us.

5086. The farmers buy a great deal of cheap feeding stuffs for their cattle?—A great deal.

5087. And therefore any protective duty would be against their interest?—Of course it would.

5088. Do you come here representing the Farmers' Association?—No.

5089. Do you come here recommended by the Chamber of Agriculture?—No, as an independent witness.

Land Courts.

5090. What is your opinion on the subject of courts for the determination of rents?—We do not want any courts. I think we can manage our business without Land Courts.

5091. Do you know what the opinion of the farmers in your district is upon that point?—Some of them have expressed a desire that they would like Land Courts—I do not say many, but a few. I think the generality are pretty well satisfied as they are.

5092. You think they are pretty well satisfied?—Yes.

Reduction of rent and rates.

5093. Have the rents generally in your district been reduced in the same proportion as on the property that you manage?—Yes.

5094. Have the tenants derived the advantage of those reductions in the reduced assessment for the local taxes?—Certainly. I make out the assessments on the whole estate for the Commissioners, and for the Poor Law Unions as well. They are all made exactly to a penny on the rentals.

5095. On the agreed rent?—On the agreed rent.

5096. Have local rates been raised or lowered?—Raised, very considerably.

5097. Since when?—Within the last 16 years, I think.

5098. How much have they been raised?—In the next parish to Elvaston they have been raised from 1*s.* in the 1*l.* to 2*s.* 8*d.*

5099. That seems to be a very heavy rise. What is that due to?—Part of that has been developed for building land, and they have a local board, and school board, and of course they want all the latest improvements of sanitary science, and water-supply and those things.

5100. And it is mainly for sanitary purposes that the increase has taken place?—No, not altogether.

5101. Does the whole of the increase fall upon the farms?—Yes.

Small holdings.

5102. Are there many small holdings in your district?—No, not many.

5103. Do you consider it desirable that there should be an extension of small holdings?—It depends on the extent. With small holdings of 10 or 15 acres, I do not think a man can live upon them. I think if you have farms of 50 or 60 acres, then they would work, but the effect of the cost of the buildings equipment of a small occupation of 10 or 15 acres puts it out of the question altogether; I have never yet made a valuation where the small man did not complain that the value was too high, although I have always valued the land at the same rate as for the big farm. They say, compare my rent with John Smith's, my next neighbour, it is 10*s.* an acre more. In common fairness you must put a value on the buildings and the houses, generally putting a low one, but if you have to build them from the commencement, the 15-acre farm would entail an outlay of at least 500*l.* 500*l.* borrowed from the Financial Company at the present rate of interest would amount to a rather heavy sum. I do not think any man could work it.

5104. Then adding the interest upon the capital which was required for equipping a small farm to the agricultural rent it makes the rent too high, compared with other farms?—Yes, more than a tenant could pay.

5105. What is the smallest acreage for a small holding that you would consider desirable?—I think there are a few small holdings of an acre, if you call them small holdings.

5106. They are rather in the nature of allotments, but I want to know about holdings where a man would live mainly by the land; what is that?—10 acres.

5107. One of the difficulties of the increase of small holdings is the difficulty of providing capital for their buildings?—Yes; unproductive capital it would be too.

5108. Have you broken up any farms under your management for the purpose of making small holdings? —No, we have plenty of allotments.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

5109. Then with regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act; what is your opinion about it?—My opinion is that the Agricultural Holdings Act wants very little amendment. I think it is as well drawn as it possibly could be. The only thing that I would suggest would be compensation for home-grown corn, and striking out clauses 1 and 2 of the first schedule.

Permanent improvements.

5110. What would be the effect of that?—It would keep tenants from spending their capital on putting up permanent erections or permanent improvements on another man's property. I have always set my face against it. If the landlord cannot or will not do the permanent improvements, I think it is no business of the tenant's, and I have found in many cases where I have been engaged in valuations and tenant right valuations, that this always leads to unpleasantness in the end, because a man spends a lot of money in building or drainage, and he gives notice and leaves at the end of a few years, and then he thinks it is very hard. Even where they have full compensation for the money spent, I have found it work very unsatisfactorily.

5111. Then I gather from you that as a system between landlord and tenant, it is better not to encourage tenants making improvements of a permanent character?—I think much better.

5112. In your view those improvements should be provided by the landlord and not by the tenant? — Yes.

5113. And therefore you would improve the Agricultural Holdings Act rather by cutting out those portions of it which aim at stimulating the tenant to make those improvements?—Yes. I think that the Agricultural Holdings Act as it stands is very fair. It goes upon the principle the value of an improvement is to an incoming tenant. I cannot imagine anything more fair or reasonable than that.

5114. I presume your evidence upon that point is rather from the point of view of the agent than that of the tenant. Do you know what the views of the tenants are in your district?—Well many of the tenants know very little about the Act. Of course they hear what the agitators say and they fall in with their views that the Act should be amended. I cannot see it.

5115. Do you know whether the subject has been discussed by the tenants in your district?—Not exactly in our district, but it has been all round the neighbourhood.

5116. Are they generally clamorous for the amendment of the Act or not?—Well, I think they are pretty well divided about it.

Dairy factories.

5117. Has there been an increase of the factory system of dairying in your district?—Yes.

5118. When did that commence?—It first commenced in 1869. The late Lord Vernon and a few others set about improving the quality of the cheese; creameries were established at a subsequent date. At that time people were making a great noise and the country was being deluged with American cheese. A few Derbyshire men contributed a guarantee fund and they engaged two men from America and started these factories. Of course they met with a great deal of opposition at the commencement, but they have gone on ever since. Last year there were 27 factories going in Derbyshire and part of Staffordshire—the northern part of Staffordshire, and three of those are butter factories, and the others are cheese factories. They make cheese for about seven months in the year, beginning about March and April, and they sell the milk in the winter. The butter factories go on the whole year.

5119. Has the result been a general improvement in the quality of the cheese and butter sent to market?—Yes; there is a great improvement in the cheese and butter too. Taking an equal number of cows where the milk is manufactured at the factory, and the same number of cows where milk is manufactured in farmhouses, the factory beats them a long way. I think there are a few individual farmhouses where they make as good or better cheese as the factories, but they are a very small number.

5119*a*. And the average has very much improved?—Very much. I may say that this year the factories began selling their cheese at 60*s*. per cwt., the Derbyshire cwt. is 120 lbs.; then they came down about the middle of the year to 55*s*., and finished off at the end of the year at 61*s*., and that point is the ruling price in factories.

5120. Is there still room for further extension of the principle in your district?—Yes.

5121. Do you think it is gradually being extended?—Yes. I think the general system of butter and cheese factories the best and the most profitable system. Lord Vernon's, at Sudbury, is the largest factory in the kingdom.

5122. Has there been any reduction in the number of labourers in your district?—Yes; there has been a slight reduction.

Wages.

5123. Not anything to speak of?—No; and the rate of wages has increased considerably.

5124. Since when?—During the last 15 years. The rate of wages of the locality is lower at Elvaston. I think that it is a good plan to keep them down rather below the farmer's, because when they are getting higher wages than the farmers give the best men want to come to us. Wages are nominally below the farmers' but we have this rule, that if a man is ill he receives half his pay, so that it is made up in that way. Our rate of wages is 16*s*. per week, the general rate with the farmers is 18*s*. up to 21*s*. per week. There are plenty of cottages in the place; there is not a cottage over 1*s*. 6*d*. per week; they generally run about 1*s*. 3*d*. per week, and they all have a garden and pay their rents half yearly.

5125. What has the rise of wages been as compared with 15 years ago?—I think the rise in wages would be about 3*s*. per week.

5126. Then, having regard to the reduction in the price of food, the labourer must be a great deal better off?—Very much better off. In addition to that, we have a clothing club in the parish to which Lord Harrington contributes; each member pays 1*s*. per fortnight to which Lord Harrington adds 4*d*.

5127. Then this considerable rise of wages in your district must have made it more difficult to pay the same rents as formerly?—I do not think it has made so much difference.

5128. Why is that?—The use of machinery is very much more general.

5129. They have saved in the number of labourers about the same amount as the wages have increased?—Yes, the machinery has saved them a great deal in many ways, in mowing machines and self-binders. A very important matter to the Derbyshire farmer is the conversion of his hay and straw into chaff—that is done now at a very small sum indeed. When the threshing machine and engine comes, it finishes the threshing, and when it is finished the whole stack of straw is cut into chaff stored in a building, and is ready for use when required.

The drought of 1893.

5130. Has the district suffered much from the drought of the present year?—The southern districts of Derbyshire, taking a line from Alfreton on the east and coming through Ashbourne to Belper, have all suffered considerably from the drought.

Hay crops.

5131. Well, then, as to the north?—The hay crops were late owing to the grass being fed late in the spring; but on the whole the oldest inhabitant can scarcely remember a more productive year than they have had in North Derbyshire this year. In the southern division, so far as I can make out, the produce of milk has dropped about 30 per cent.

5132. Have there been abatements of rent in the southern division in consequence of this?—No.

5133. But in the northern division you say that the quantity is greater than ever before for a great many years past?—Yes.

Store stock.

5134. And the farmers have done well?—Store stock has been very low, and they have suffered thereby. I never knew the price of store stock so low as it has been and is now.

5135. That is, I suppose, on account of the exceptional drought, and the difficulty of getting food for the cattle?—Partly that. There was a scare with the light hay crops, and every young animal with a spark of meat on it was slaughtered instead of being kept for next year; this not only reduced the number of store cattle but depreciated the value of beef.

5136. They all went into the market, at the same time?—Yes. I look upon it that all kinds of stock will be very dear next year as we are very much below our average number of cattle. The Agricultural Returns do not show anything like the depreciation in the number, because there have been a great many killed since the returns were sent in.

5137. Next year, if there is an average production, you say there will be a dearth of stock?—No doubt.

5138. And therefore for that reason you think it will rise in price?—Yes.

Rent on a sliding scale.

5139. Have you any opinion on the subject of a sliding scale of rent?—Yes.

5140. What is your opinion upon that point?—A sliding scale is the only thing that would carry us through.

Revaluation of holdings.

5141. What is your opinion upon the subject?—I should make a valuation of every holding in the kingdom, and fix the rent according to the value of the produce to-day. That would be the starting point. The first thing I should ascertain would be the productive power of the soil, by going over every field and taking them separately, and estimate the average produce; I should not altogether fix it according to the state of the cultivation at the present time. I should try to arrive at a medium, the farm being in the high state of cultivation, and worth more and would produce more at the present time than an average price of produce, I should not take it at that. I would take it at the average or normal rate.

5142. Is it your opinion that the landlords and tenants would adopt that?—I think the landlords would; the tenants are opposed to it.

5143. Your impression seems to be rather a valuation of all the land?—Yes.

5144. And fixing the rent, and thereafter the rent should rise or fall according to the scale of prices?—Exactly, and then a man cannot come and say, "I am "paying you rent on my own improvements." It does not matter how he increases the production by skill and outlay; he increases it to his own advantage, and not to the advantage of the landlord, whose rent is based on the price, not on the produce.

5145. Is it your proposal that this should be made compulsory on landlords and tenants?—I think it would be a good thing to do.

5146. To make it compulsory?—It would settle the land question for the next 50 years.

5147. And no tenant should be allowed to hire a farm at less, or a landlord to let a farm at less rent than that?—No. Then there has been a good deal said about continuous occupation. I do not think anybody wants continuous occupation, but if they do, I should be quite willing to grant them 21 years' leases, with a break at 7 years and 14 years; this would simplify the Agricultural Holdings Act to a very great extent. When a man enters on a farm he would know exactly the value of it when he starts, and if he goes on for 7 or 14 years, and increases the value of his land so much per acre, I would pay him the capitalised value of it, whatever it was. This would be the measure of his tenant right.

5148. What is the practice on the Elvaston Estate; have leases been given?—No; they will not take leases.

5149. Are they tenancies from year to year?—They are all from year to year.

Land courts.

5150. I think you told me earlier in your evidence that you were opposed to the establishment of Land Courts to determine the rent of land?—So I am.

5151. But you now recommend a sort of universal determination of the rent of land?—No, I think not. The rents would rise and fall with the prices.

5152. Is not that your last proposal of a State valuation of all the land of the country, once and for all?—Yes.

5153. Well, that looks very much like a Land Court on a great scale, not to be appealed to in individual cases, but to determine once for all what should be the rent of land; I only wish to know what your views are. Is that your proposal?—I think that would be a fair thing. If the tenant has a 21 years' lease, I am quite willing that he should give the landlord a year's notice before the end of the first seven years, and then the landlord gets possession of the land.

5154. That is another part of the proposal, namely, that the tenant should have the option of having a 21 years' lease, but your first proposal was that it should be a general valuation of all the land of the country with the view of determining rent?—Yes.

5155. (*Lord Cobham.*) Based upon the present rent?—It would have nothing to do with the present rent.

Rent on a sliding scale.

5156. (*Chairman.*) There is to be a re-valuation of all the land by a Government department, and that should be the measure of rent as between the landlord and tenant; is that your proposal?—No, that is only the starting-point. When the price goes up, the rent goes up, and when the prices go down, the rent goes down.

5157. I understood you to say that you would not allow a landlord to receive a higher rent or a tenant to pay a less rent?—No; you commence with that as a starting point whatever it may be; but the rents would fluctuate according to the price. You cannot expect a man to pay more than the land is really worth. The rent fluctuates with the price. We do not know what the value would be next year; next year it might not be worth so much. A man might say, "My farm is too "dear, and you must help me." A land court fixes a hard and fast rent, under a sliding scale the rent varies with the market value of the produce.

5158. The point I wish to arrive at is whether in your view at first starting, this valuation is to form the rent as between landlord and tenant?—Yes, to start with.

5159. It seems to me somewhat inconsistent with the other answer you gave, namely, that you are against a land court, because this in fact is a land court for saying what the rent should be?—I do not think you would establish a land court in that way.

5160. (*Mr. Elton.*) You have a sliding scale which may go up and down?—Yes.

5161. (*Lord Vernon.*) Your idea arises from the fact that farms in Derbyshire for many years were always let according to the value of the cwt. of cheese?—Yes.

5162. You imagine that it would fluctuate from year to year?—It is exactly on the same principle as the tithe commutation.

Land courts.

5163. Surely the difficulty would be the first commencement, you would have as the chairman says, to have a land court to fix the basis?—You must have a valuation, but I do not admit the idea of a land court.

Revaluation of holdings.

5164. (*Chairman.*) I understood you to say that the valuation would be made field by field for each farm?—Yes.

5165. I presume that would be taken into account?—Yes.

5166. The only point on which I am not quite certain as to your views is as to the initial point of this new departure, whether this valuation is to be compulsory on both landlord and tenant?—That is the whole thing in detail (*handing in a document*). (*See* Appendix A., XVIII.)

5167. Whether the initial point of starting this new plan, this State valuation, is to be compulsory both on landlord and tenant?—It hardly struck me as being necessary to make it compulsory.

5168. (*Lord Cobham.*) How about buildings and other improvements if the rents are to rise and fall automatically?—The landlord has to keep them up now and he would have to keep them up then.

5169. They would come into the valuation?—That is a point I should take into consideration in fixing the starting point, the state of the buildings, if a certain amount of building is required for the farm I should make an allowance.

5170. Supposing the landlord lets them down when the prices rise what would the rent be then?—He would not be likely to do that.

5171. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What would happen if no tenant would take advantage of this?—The landlord would farm it himself.

State loans for carrying out improvements.

5172. (*Lord Cobham.*) You are in favour of cheaper money for estate improvements, but what you would suggest would only represent about a saving of 1 per cent. of the present advances by the Lands Improvement

Company, 3 per cent. with a sinking fund for repayment in 25 years would mean about 5½ per cent. or rather more?—I am afraid you cannot get it at 5½ per cent.

Revaluation of holdings.

5173. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Your plan I understand is that there should be a re-valuation of every field in the country made by some Government department?—I have not in my mind a Government department.

5174. Whom have you in your mind?—You on your own farm could select a valuer, and your tenant could select another, and they would fix the valuation—that is my idea.

5175. It should be done then by a voluntary arrangement between the two?—By a voluntary arrangement.

5176. Then you withdraw what you said as to this being compulsory on the part of the State?—Yes.

5177. By whom would the cost have to be borne?—By the landlord as now, it costs 1*s.* per acre.

Rent on a sliding scale.

5178. When you have established this initial value, the prices I understand are to rise and fall according to the price of produce?—The rent has to rise or fall.

5179. The rent?—Yes.

5180. How often would you value the rent?—Every year as the prices varied.

5181. Who do you contemplate would fix the scale according to which it would rise and fall, the two parties between themselves?—Yes, it would be a very simple matter.

5182. On what produce are these prices to be based, on certain kinds of produce, or all kinds of produce?—All kinds of produce.

5183. You would schedule all the different produce of the country?—Yes.

5184. But I understood from you that in your opinion the tenant farmers would greatly object to this?—Yes, a great many of them would.

5185. Why would they object to it?—Holding under a large landowner they would rather be as they are.

5186. Because then they think they would get better terms?—Because they know that the landlord does not take advantage now; landlords never have done and they would not now.

Causes of depression.

5187. Now with reference to another matter, what in your opinion is the chief cause of the present depression of agriculture?—Well just at present all kinds of farm produce are at such a low price.

Improved prices and reduced rates.

5188. And the only remedy is an improvement in the price?—Yes, an improvement in the price, and a reduction of the rates and taxes.

Cattle disease.

5189. I imagine that in your county cattle disease would be very serious?—Yes.

5190. Have you ever had pleuro-pneumonia or foot-and-mouth disease in Derbyshire?—Not in my time, but it was very bad before my time.

5191. Do you attach great importance to the disease being kept out of the country?—Very great importance.

Slaughter of cattle at port of debarkation.

5192. Are you in favour of what has been suggested by many other witnesses that all cattle and stock imported into this country should be slaughtered at the port of landing?—Every one of them.

State loans.

5193. (*Lord Cobham.*) I was asking you how you make out that you get cheaper loans in the way you suggest. You say it would only involve a reduction of about 1 per cent. in the charges at present made by the Land Improvement Companies?—I think I have got some of mine here; I can give you a case; it is only a small one that I was interested in, 1,933*l.* 0*s.* 3*d.* The preliminary expenses were 90*l.* 13*s.* 9*d.*

5194. Will you give us the general result?—The yearly repayment was 132*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

5195. What per-centage was it?—That was one farm, about 6¾ per cent.

5196. But 3 per cent. on a sum and a sinking fund for repayment in 25 years would certainly come to 5½ per cent.?—I am quite willing to spread it over a larger number of years.

5197. Up to 50 years?—40 years.

5198. You think that the drainage should last as long as that?—If it is well done it would, and the buildings too.

5199. The rates you would merge in a general income tax?—I would.

Rates.

5200. That you think would be a considerable relief from the pressure of rates upon the land?—Yes, it would bring in a very large additional income which is not rated at all, and I think it was the original intention that these rates were to be levied on means and substance, and I shall bring that down as low as 100*l.*

5201. You say that your rates are only another name for rent?—So they are.

5202. Then your remedy would be a relief for the landlord only?—If it were a relief for the landlord he could afford to relieve the tenant.

5203. In that way a great advantage would be given to agriculture generally?—Yes.

5204. Through the landlord?—Yes.

5205. You would not say that in every case the advantage would reach the tenant?—Almost in every case. In my experience the most suffering man at present by agricultural depression is the man with about 2,000*l.* or 4,000*l.* a year—it is quite heart-rending; they have to leave their homes, and many of them have to let or sell their property and household goods, and leave the country. Those are the men who suffer most keenly. Even in our part of the country such cases are numerous.

5206. Do not you think that some part of the relief would go in increased luxury of living or would otherwise remain with the landowners?—I do not think so.

Small holdings.

5207. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You gave 10 acres as a small holding on which a man could live?—Yes.

5208. Would it be all arable?—He would not want more than an acre of arable.

5209. He would have to live on that?—He would have to exist; he would be no better and not so well off as an agricultural labourer; if he had 16 acres he would keep four cows, and he would occupy his whole time, and would not work to earn any rent outside his own occupation.

5210. But would he not be able to employ his children?—Partly, some of the younger ones.

Improvement of stock.

5211. I think you said that one thing that was required was to have better stock?—Yes.

5212. Surely stock in the last few years has very greatly improved?—Vastly; you mean the quality of the stock?

5213. Yes. Is it the quantity or the quality that has improved?—The quality has not improved in the dairy counties.

5214. It has not improved?—Certainly not.

5215. Surely the pedigree cattle and bulls are cheap enough now for the tenant farmer to buy them?—So they are; but the tenants of dairy farms have a strong prejudice against pedigree stock. I have been arguing that point all my life, but it has had very little effect. Another thing that has tended to decrease the quality is the milk trade; a man does not care what kind of bull he uses so long as he rears stock.

5216. That is a mistake?—Yes. Every farm should be self-supporting in its stock.

5217. He ought to rear his cattle as well as sell his milk?—Yes.

5218. And therefore you would say there is no necessity for the importation of cattle from Canada or elsewhere?—I do not think so; I think we could supply all the store cattle required, the only protection we want is protection against foreign disease. We want no other protection.

5219. Would not that tell in another way, that they would rear a good deal more stock, and the land would not be run out by milk?—I do not think that the land has been run out by milk. My experience is quite the contrary. When I came to Elvaston there was not 20*l.* spent on the whole property in the purchase of manures and feeding stuffs. Since then, to my knowledge, they have spent a sum equal to the rent of the land, and purchased food, so that the land has not suffered. Those who are in the milk trade keep up the winter supply, and they cannot do this without the use of purchased food.

Rates.

5220. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Are not rates a great burden to agriculturists; have the rates increased in your district?—Yes, they have.

5221. In what proportion have they increased within the last 20 years?—I gave the sum of 1*s.* to 2*s.* 8*d.* in the pound.

5222. (*Mr. Long.*) That was the next parish; what is it in your parish?—That is in the parish.

5223. (*Lord Vernon.*) That is, in a great measure, owing to Derby having extended?—In our parish they have doubled.

5224. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) May we take it that in the whole of the district the rates have increased?—Considerably increased.

5225. In the strictly rural districts?—Yes.

Fruit farming.

5226. I think you have encouraged fruit farming on your estate?—Yes.

5227. Would you say how that has answered, in your opinion?—I think it will answer very well, and has, as far as we have gone.

5228. Does the landlord find the trees?—The landlord finds the trees and the tenants plant them. I could see some difficulty if the tenant found the trees and made the orchard and planted it. Some day or other the landlord would have to pay compensation, and compensation on an orchard in full bearing is rather heavy, so that we have no tenant right in orchards that we have planted.

5229. In your opinion should fruit planting be encouraged?—Certainly.

5230. In places of course where it was suitable?—Yes.

Rent on a sliding scale.

5231. (*Mr. Giffen.*) With regard to the sliding scale: after the sliding scale was established the rents should rise and fall proportionately with the price of the produce; that is to say, when produce rises 10 per cent. rents are to go up 10 per cent., and if produce falls 10 per cent. the rents are to go down 10 per cent.?—It would not be exactly a per-centage. It might not be a per-centage to that extent. However I think it would work out as you say.

5232. I wish to know the working of the idea?—If the value of this produce goes up, the rent goes up in the same ratio.

5233. Would not you have to fix it beforehand, to go up exactly the same or not? If prices go up 10 per cent., that rent should go up 20 per cent.?—No.

5234. What should the proportion be?—That would be ruled entirely by the value of the produce.

5235. That is, if the value of the produce goes up 10 per cent., rents go up 10 per cent., and if the produce goes down 10 per cent., the rent goes down 10 per cent.?—I put it that the average produce of this farm is 6*l.* per acre; that is the average produce at the starting point. The produce may go up in one instance; the price of corn may go up, the price of beef and mutton may go up, and it does not affect the others; and only to a small rise; it only raises it equal to the sum that is added to the 6*l.*; you might increase the value of the produce, you might increase it from 6*l.* to 6*l.* 5*s.* 0*d.*

5236. All that I want to know is what your idea is, because if it is to be proportionate to a general rise or fall of agricultural produce, the next question I was going to put is this: whether it would be quite fair?—I do not think it would.

5237. We have evidence as to a fall of 20 to 30 per cent. in prices, and you have had a fall of 60 to 70 per cent. in rents?—Yes.

5238. So that that would not be the idea?—Yes, that is so; rents at the present time, I am sorry to say, are very peculiar. I know plenty of farms that I consider are rented much under their value; at the same time I know other farms which I consider let above their value.

5239. But it would not work out quite fairly to make rents go up and down exactly in proportion to the rise or fall of prices?—Yes, I think so; I do not see how you can do it in any other way, to make it equitable between the owner and occupier.

5240. You do not admit that there have been cases lately where prices have gone down from 25 to 30 per cent., and rents have gone down from 60 to 70 per cent.?—I am quite aware of it.

5241. That might happen again?—Not under the sliding scale.

5242. How are you sure about that?—It is impossible.

5243. Is it not the case that the rent being only a portion of the gross produce, if you make the rent come up and down in proportion to the rise and fall of the gross produce, the change in rent does not correspond to the change of what the tenant could pay? If prices go up 10 per cent., the tenant is able to pay 20 per cent. more rent, and if prices come down 10 per cent., he might get 50 per cent. in his rent to make him where he was before?—No; you start at the average price. It is exactly the same as the tithe; you understand the tithe commutation; it was on the same lines exactly.

5244. But the rent is a much bigger thing than the tithe, as a matter of fact, in proportion to the outgoings than the tithes, and the point I am putting is that if you make it exactly in proportion you would have in this case, that if prices go up, the tenant would pay less than he ought to pay under different circumstances, and if prices go down, the tenant does not get the relief in the form of rent that he would get by this plan that you propose?—I am happy to say that I do not know any landlords who are not willing to take the value of their land, and I cannot see any other way of getting the value of the land than taking the value of the produce.

5245. I am just trying to show that as prices go up the rent ought to go up in a larger proportion to be quite fair?—No.

5246. And as prices go down, the rent should also go down in larger proportions. That is just the point. You do not agree with that at all. You think that your rule would work?—I could not agree to that.

5247. The next point is this: whether the change in rent is to take place uniformly upon every farm of the country, according to the average change in the price of all agricultural produce, or whether, when the change takes place, you are to have regard to the productions of the particular farm?—Yes.

5248. Or rather to have regard to the productions not the particular farm?—Yes.

5249. Then you must settle that the prices have to vary according to a sliding scale; and also as regards each particular farm, what the produce is to be considered to be, and how much importance is to be given to each kind of produce for that farm?—Yes, that is exactly what I do. I take each kind of produce separately, and I estimate its value to-day. Well, you have the milk, and meat, and corn, part of the lands is tillage crops; it is worked under the six-crops system; and the value of six crops, taking the average of the six crops, would be a factor. Then you should take the meat and the milk; this farm produces so much milk, and so much store stock, and then bring them all in the calculation.

5250. That is just the point; you would have a sliding scale for each farm?—No; the sliding scale would be the same, but the value of the produce would be very different.

5251. You would have to fix for each farm how much effect the change in the particular kind of produce was to have?—No, the farm produces so much milk, meat, and so much store stock, and the average of the six crops will amount to so much in that way; and then I take the whole of the outgoings to arrive at the average rent, the rent, the rates, the tenant's interest on capital, and allowance of so much for his labour and superintendence, tradesmen's bills, insurance of stock, and the whole outgoings, and deduct it from the gross produce, and this shows the net rent. I should let all the land tithe free and rate free.

5252. That applies to the standard, but what I am speaking of now is the variation according to prices?—It would not affect it in the least; each class would be ruled to what it was—each farm.

5253. But you must fix in each farm how much effect the particular change, say, in the dairy produce, or price of wheat is to have upon the net rent?—No, take it according to the market.

5254. Because in applying it, and working it out, after five years' time the farm may not be producing the same kind of things as when the rent was established, but you have got to fix beforehand what the effect is to be of each change in price?—You could not look forward to the change in prices; you must take your chance in the change of prices. What you would have to do is to take a fair price.

5255. What I am asking you is how it is to be applied, how to put it into form because you must settle beforehand, if the wheat goes down 20 per cent., how far that is to apply to the produce of a particular farm?—I put it in this way. I think it is rather wasting time to go into it or else I have got the whole details here.

5256. I should like to have some idea of what you mean?—I will give you a practical illustration: This is a farm of 260 acres in the Midland counties, consisting of 60 acres tillage, 50 acres feeding land, 100 acres of good dairy land, and 50 acres ordinary store pasture. Now the tillage land I work on the six-course system, and it works out at 6*l.* 17*s.* 4½*d.* the acre. That is the average produce of the tillage land. I take that as one factor, that comes out to be 412*l.* Then as to the feeding land, the 50 acres of feeding land produces a certain quantity of beef at a certain price, and that comes to 243*l.* The 100 acres of dairy land produces so much milk at a fixed price and that comes out at 525*l.* The 50 acres of store pasture produces so much increased weight of store cattle, 162*l.* 10*s.* The whole amount is 1,342*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* That is the gross produce of the 260 acres.

5257. (*Mr. Channing.*) At present prices?—Yes, at present prices if you like to put it so.

5258. It is not the average of six years but present prices you are taking. Are not you taking the average of years?—I am taking the market price for one year on the 260 acres; that gives you 5*l.* 3*s.* 3½*d.* per acre. From this the following deductions must be made: Cost of manual labour, horse labour, seeds, and plants, tradesmen's bills, insurance of stock and crops, the interest of capital embarked.

5259. (*Lord Cobham.*) What is the total of the outgoings?—3*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* deducted from 5*l.* 3*s.* 3½*d.* leaves 2*l.* 1*s.* 9½*d.* to cover rent, rates, and tithes, which is not a fixed quantity.

5260. (*Mr. Giffen.*) What is the total rent out of the gross produce of 1,340*l.*?—The gross rent is 2*l.* 1*s.* 9½*d.*

5261. How much in the total does that make? How many acres? The rent appears to be 40 per cent. of the increased produce in this case?—That is the gross rent, but the tithe would be 5*s.* probably an acre, and the rates would be 3*s.* per acre, and that is to be deducted from the 2*l.* 1*s.* 9½*d.* Then you get at the net rent.

5262. But I am afraid that that is a little away from the questions that I was putting which were with reference to how that sum of gross rent was to vary according to the price of produce, how much each price was to affect the thing?—If the 60 acres of tillage land made less than 412*l.* there would be a reduction in the rent; if it made more there would be an increase.

5263. Would you have to make an account out for each kind of land for each particular farm?—You have got it when the valuation is made out of that in four lines.

5264. How would you ascertain in subsequent years what the gross produce is to be?—You have nothing to do with the gross produce.

5265. (*Lord Cobham.*) You take the market price?—Yes.

5266. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You would have to start with wheat first to enter into the scale, say, to the extent of 20 per cent., and dairy produce to the extent of 30 per cent., and so on. You would have to fix that at the beginning?—I do fix it—every one. I will tell you what they all make. The 60 acres of tillage is 412*l.*

5267. We have to assume that after the sliding scale is in operation the price of wheat and butter and cheese were all to have the fixed per-centage untouched, they were to enter as regards the variation in prices?—Oh, no.

5268. (*Lord Cobham.*) Will you put that paper in?—Yes (*handing it in*). I think it is simple enough. It is clear enough anyway, whatever the alterations might be, it would not affect the rent either up or down. You have no new calculations; all that you have to ascertain is the market price.

5269. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You have got to settle once for all whether the price of wheat is to affect the rent to the extent of 20 per cent. or 30 per cent., what it is to be?—You quite misunderstand me.

5270. Under the tithe commutation I suppose you are aware that the prices of wheat, barley, and oats, each of them, affect the changes in the tithe average to the extent of one-third?—Yes, so they would here.

5271. Supposing you have 20 articles there, how much does each affect the change in that plan of yours?—But you have not 20 articles; you have only five in the whole farm of 260 acres.

5272. You tell us to take the price of agricultural produce?—You have the prices of all agricultural produce.

5273. Are there only five articles produced?—You have the tillage land of 60 acres as follows:—Oats, wheat, roots, barley, seeds—two years of seeds—and these are worth so much an acre each.

5274. But you have cattle as well?—I have told you that—what quantity of beef the feeding land will make and what it is worth per lb. I have told you what quantity of milk the land will produce per acre at a fixed price.

5275. Excuse me. You have enumerated more than five articles already of which the price would have to be ascertained?—Well, you have in the six courses, but not when they are brought together—six on the tillage land, and four besides that; the six on the tillage land I bring into one.

5276. I want to know what weight you have for each article, and how you are going to vary it for every farm in the kingdom?—The weight and the market price.

5277. Then a further question: How are the prices to be ascertained?—Very easily.

5278. Who is to fix what the prices are to be according to which the rent is to be paid?—I should be quite satisfied with the Government returns of the market.

5279. But there are no Government returns of meat?—I think so. I should be quite satisfied with the market returns.

5280. You have only Government returns for wheat, barley, and oats?—I have for milk, and meat, and live stock, and the whole thing every week.

5281. I think not?—I am sure I have it.

5282. You have only got it in the shape of wheat, barley, and oats, which would be available for a scheme of that kind?—No.

5283. (*Mr. Clay.*) You gave us the gross receipts of the farm?—Yes.

5284. And the rent?—Yes.

5285. What is the amount of the rates and taxes?—I have taken that off. I have told you that.

5286. What does it amount to?—3*l.* an acre, or something like that.

5287. And how do you get at the base for beginning this calculation of charging rent?—3*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* is the expense; that includes everything in respect to capital allowance to the tenants for supervision and labour, and I have given you tradesmen's bills, insurance of the stock and crops, and interest on capital. I have given you the whole thing, and it amounts to 3*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* per acre, following that six-course system.

5288. And have you allowed for deterioration of stock and implements, and other things?—I give you the insurance. I think that is enough.

5289. What does the insurance come to?—That is rather an unusual thing to include, tradesmen's bills and insurance of stock and crops and interest on the capital embarked.

5290. Insurance of stock; is that against fire?—Well, you would not insure live stock against fire. I insure them against accident.

5291. What I want is the deterioration of stock, implements, and other things?—They are included.

5292. In the fire insurance?—They are included in the interest on the capital embarked, and the interest on the machinery and implements on the farm would be put at a fixed sum to cover the interest of them.

5293. What is the sum you have put down?—I have given you the gross sum.

5294. They would be separate sums?—I can give you the separate sums, but I have not got them here.

5295. If you have a bad year, and you are losing stock and a horse or two, no insurance will meet that?—Of course you can insure every head of stock.

5296. What is the sum that you have allowed for that?—I do not know what it is. I have not got the details here, but it is so.

5297. On what basis would you begin to name the rent? You say the price of the produce?—Yes.

5298. How would you get at it?—I would take the market price.

5299. But is not there a deal of produce that never reaches the market?—The value of it is ascertainable.

5300. Is it not like damaged corn that never sees the market?—But that would not affect you in the slightest.

5301. But if you charged for 10 quarters and only seven quarters went to market, and three quarters were left at home that would be damaged corn, and perhaps light corn; that would not bring the same price as the seven quarters?—No.

5302. I think that is an important element; how are you going to begin the basis?—Easily enough; it is very easy. I have not the slightest doubt about commencing on a basis. Then when prices get up and you are making a lot of money while the prices are up, you cannot afterwards come to me when the prices go down and say, you are charging me a rent upon my improvements. If the value of this is so much per acre to-day, and by your good management and skill and capital you increase it beyond that you do not pay 1*s.* extra.

5303. You have no right to traffic on a person's extra ability?—I do not want to. But you have no right to say to me, You are charging me on my improvements, when if you make improvements you get the value out of it.

5304. There is a second value?—There is no second value. How can you apply it every year, and this is the starting point?

5305. I understand the sliding scale?—This is not a new valuation; it does not entail a new valuation. You mean that the valuation of the produce is 4*l.* per acre to-day, and then 4*l.* per acre over the whole term is to last 50 years.

5306. (*Lord Cobham.*) You do not want a re-valuation?—No.

5307. (*Mr. Clay.*) Granting that you are right, which I do not think you are, say you have got a bad year and prices go up, and your wheat crop and barley and oats and cattle and sheep are deteriorated by certain things which we have come across in this country, what would happen then?—You can take it in any other way. You are a tenant under a 20 years' lease; how do you meet the bad seasons? You might go to your landlord and say, I want 20 per cent. reduction. You are a tenant farmer, and you know.

5308. I am not saying what I am. I want to know this. You are going to put a certain price, and you have got nothing to regulate it in bad seasons, because in seasons like this your farm per acre is reduced 33⅓ per cent. Are you going to pay the rent on the high rate; can you answer that question?—It is only a quibble; there is nothing in it.

5309. Is not the tenant a loser?—How would he be a loser when he is a gainer.

5310. That is not the question I am asking you. I suppose you do not give an answer to that question?—I could answer it, but it is not worth while.

5311. (*Mr. Little.*) Your proposal is roughly a produce rent?—Yes.

5312. You would have a part of the produce returned, not in actual produce, but in the market price of the produce of the day?—Yes.

5313. So many cwts. of beef, so many quarters of wheat, so much cheese, and so much milk; that is the principle of it?—Pardon me for a moment. I took milk and everything sold. I included milk, and I took milk to be one calculation; it comes to the same thing.

5314. You took certain representative products, and you did not take it in money at all, but it comes to the same thing?—Yes.

5315. You fix the original basis of rent according to the productive capacity of the soil?—Yes.

5316. You would have to take into consideration some other things such as buildings?—Yes.

5317. The situation?—Yes, certainly.

5318. And circumstances might change?—Yes.

5319. The land might be detached from the building, that is possible in changes of property?—Yes.

5320. Some portion of the land which has had its value fixed for 50 years might become detached from the buildings?—Yes.

5321. Therefore you would have to consider how much of that which produced rent was represented by buildings?—Yes.

5322. Again with regard to the situation, it might be changed by the introduction of a railway, or by some such means?—Yes.

5323. And the value of the land might be increased?—Yes.

5324. Would your original valuation take into account these circumstances?—No. I do not see how you can provide for unforeseeen circumstances of that kind; but they could always be met.

5325. Certainly; but I rather look at it as a fixed sum settled for 50 years between landlord and tenant, which may require change frequently?—Yes.

5326. You did not give Dr. Giffen what I should have liked to have heard from you, the proportionate part which each article should bear, that is to say, would you fix one-third of the rent on wheat, and two-thirds on meat, or any definite proportion?—No; I take the land as I find it.

5327. Just the proportion that you think that the particular farm might grow at the time when the valuation was made?—Yes.

5328. If any change took place the rent might be an unfair one?—Yes.

5329. If the tenant changed his method of farming, he would be paying rent on the value of the produce which he had not got instead of that which he had got?—Yes.

5330. In the case that you stated you put the average produce at 5*l.* 3*s.* 3½*d.*, and the expenses at 3*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.*, leaving 2*l.* 1*s.* 9½*d.* for rent, tithe, and rates?—Yes.

5331-2. The land might be tithe free?—Yes.

5333. But we need not regard the question of tithe, except that with tithe-free land the rent would be so much more of the 2*l.* 1*s.* 9½*d.*, supposing that the expenses increased and the produce came down, would you still give the landlord the same amount?—I do not see if the produce came down that it would be the fault of the tenant.

5334. I mean the value of the produce?—I mean the value of the produce, the rent goes down.

5335. But you are allowing the landlord what is left after the expenses are taken off the value of the crop?—Certainly.

5336. But supposing the expenses increase, there would be less rent?—Yes.

5337. But the tenant would have to pay the same quantity of produce, because this rent is fixed?—No, the rent is not fixed, but fluctuates with the price.

5338. Therefore all the increase of expenditure would fall upon the tenant?—No.

5339. If the labour increases 50 per cent. that 3*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* would be increased, the 2*l.* 1*s.* 9½*d.* would be diminished; but the tenant would still pay 2*l.*1*s.* 9½*d.* in produce?—Yes, but the cost of labour per acre has not increased.

5340. And that you think would be satisfactory. You said you would give continuous occupation, and you talked of a lease for 21 years, but that is scarcely continuous, because after the 21 years it comes to an end?—Yes.

5341. And what would be done at the end of the 21 years?—There would be a new lease.

5342. On a new rent?—Then I would settle up the whole thing. If the sitting tenant has increased the value of the land, I would pay him what was due to him for the increased value, and then start with a new rent.

5343. You would have to fix your basis of rent again?—It does not want any fixing.

5344. But surely if the landlord compensates the tenant for improvements, you said he was to recoup himself out of the increased rent. The landlord has to compensate the tenant at the end of the lease for his improvements?—Yes.

5345. And to recoup himself by raising the rent?—Yes.

5346. You must have a fresh valuation?—Why should I?

5347. To get the increased rent?—Of course you would have to make a fresh valuation to know what was due to the outgoing tenants.

5348. At per acre?—Yes.

5349. In money?—In money or produce, or divided.

5350. In the proportion orginally fixed?—Not in the proportion originally fixed.

5351. Yet some proportion. I do not mean to say the same quantity of produce, but in the same proportion originally fixed?—Yes.

5352. Then the valuation would not last 50 years?—I have made a wrong impression, my intention was not 50 years; it is not going to continue 50 years, or perhaps 20 years; I said it would settle the land question for the next 50 years; but it was not my idea that it was to be unalterable.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

5353. You have had considerable experience in the administration of the Agricultural Holdings Act, have you not?—Yes, I have.

Permanent Improvements.

5354. Have you found any practical difficulties in the working of the Act?—None at all; the only difficulty I have found is in the permanent improvements—1 and 2 of Schedule I.

5355. No practical difficulty in securing compensation to the tenant for ordinary improvements has been noted?—Yes.

Freedom of cultivation and sale.

5356. With regard to agreements, I think I understood from you that the conditions in the agreements on the estates under your management have been relaxed as regards cultivation?—Yes.

5357. Have they been relaxed as regards the sale of produce?—Yes.

5358. Do you think that tenants generally now have by agreement sufficient freedom as regards cultivation and sale?—Yes.

5359. By agreement?—Yes.

5360. Not simply by sufferance?—No, by agreement.

Form of agreement.

5361. Have you introduced an entirely different form of agreement?—Yes, some years ago.

5362. Might I ask what terms you make with regard to the sale of produce?—Well, the late Lord Harrington was a very liberal-minded man. When he came to the property the manure belonged to the landlord, and he gave the manure to the tenants in every case, and he had a new agreement prepared that the hay and straw belonged to the tenant, except that he should leave at the end of the tenancy one-fourth of the hay and one-fourth of the straw for the incoming tenant to be paid for at full value; the whole of the manure belonged to the tenant. That has continued so. I am sorry to say that I have changed my mind very much about it. If I had the money I would buy all the manure; the manure ought in every case to belong to the land, it increases the valuation very considerably, and in these times when capital is not very plentiful, it is very important for the incoming tenant. We have plenty of valuations where the tenant right is 2*l.* and 3*l.* an acre. Now this money is locked up as long as the tenant remains in occupation. We want to reduce the amount of valuations as much as we possibly can in every way. The tenant can sell hay or straw or anything else.

5363. Unconditionally?—Yes.

5364. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You fix the rent by what the produce is, and what the outgoings are?—Yes.

5365. You take the produce on one side?—The value of the produce.

5366. And then you take the expenditure that has been made in getting that produce?—Yes.

5367. What do you do with the remainder, fix it as the rent?—Yes.

5368. What does the tenant get?—He gets interest for his money; he gets interest for his labour.

5369. He is paid so much interest?—I give him so much interest on his capital.

5370. (*Lord Cobham.*) You give so much for interest and supervision?—I put it in the shape of allowance to the tenant for the supervision.

Rates.

5371. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Then as to the question of rates you propose to raise everything by means of an income tax?—I do.

5372. How do you propose to spend it; through the Government?—Yes.

5373. Then you would abolish local authorities altogether?—To a great extent, we are going to have too many local authorities.

5374. Do you do away with them or keep them for certain purposes?—Oh, for many purposes, such as roads and parish business.

5375. Have you to take the money from the Government out of a common purse?—Not what they require, but a certain allowance.

5376. But supposing the allowance is not sufficient?—They would have to make it sufficient.

5377. How would you distribute it to them? I understood you proposed an income tax, so much in the pound, and the Government would have to distribute it to the different localities?—I think the support of the poor costs 14,000,000*l.* at present.

5378. No?—Well, then, 9,000,000*l.*

5379. Of which 22 per cent. is paid by the Government. I do not quite understand then how you manage your local expenditure. At present the local authorities incur the expenditure, and they raise all the rates that are necessary to meet it?—Yes.

5380. But are you going to abolish the local authorities?—No, I would let the local authorities still go on with the work, but they must have their funds from the Government.

5381. However much they may require?—I should not say that.

5382. How are they to do it?—They know what it costs at present.

5383. But the expenditure varies year by year. The Government are to raise certain sums, I understand?—Yes.

5384. Is every local authority to dip into the common purse for what it requires?—Certainly not.

5385. To what extent?—To the extent they have spent hitherto.

5386. Supposing they have not enough to meet that expenditure, would they raise it by rates?—No; the income tax would be laid according to what they required.

5387. They would get whatever amount of expenditure they incurred back from the Government?—Yes.

5388. However much it was? Supposing that they incurred a very heavy expenditure, much higher than they incur at present, how would that be met?—They could only meet it by increasing the income tax.

5389. Then they would get it from the Government?—Yes.

5390. Would not that encourage a great deal of extravagance?—I do not think so.

5391. You say that the rates in the next parish to yours have risen from 1*s.* to 2*s.* 8*d.*?—Yes.

5392. That is owing to a great many building operations in the parish?—Yes.

5393. I suppose property in the parish has gone up in value in consequence of building operations?—I do not think so; there are a great many houses in the parish not let.

5394. You do not think the building has been remunerative?—No.

5395. Most of the additional expenditure has been for sanitary works?—Yes, the sanitary rate and the road rates have increased.

5396. But the agricultural land has not paid its full value to the sanitary rate, it is rated at one-fourth?—But the general rates are much higher; we are getting up now the same as in the towns, about 6*s.* 8*d.* in the pound on property.

5397. In this parish?—It has nothing to do with the land.

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5398. But in this parish it has risen from 1*s.* to 2*s.* 8*d.* in the pound?—Yes.

5399. How much of that 2*s.* 8*d.* does the land bear?—The 2*s.* 8*d.*

5400. What do the houses pay?—6*s.* 8*d.*

5401. In that particular parish of Elvaston?—No, Alvaston.

Remedy for depression.

5402. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What would be your remedy for the agricultural depression?—Well, for the agricultural depression a higher price is the readiest remedy.

5403. You have expressed yourself against protection?—I have, except protection against imported diseases.

5404. But that is practically secured at present, is it not?—Yes.

Slaughter of animals at port of debarkation.

5405. You said that you would slaughter animals at the port of debarkation?—I should.

5406. Well, I am a grazier; would you prevent me from buying my grazing animals in the cheapest markets if the animals were free from disease?—But you are not sure that that they are free from disease.

5407. If they are free from disease, then would you prevent me from buying them?—I would not allow live cattle to be brought into this country. We can supply the live cattle.

5408. Do you think it would be fair to make me buy as a grazier in a dearer market when I could get cattle cheaper elsewhere, when they were free from disease?—I am not quite sure; you might get them cheaper, but I am not quite sure that they would pay you better.

5409. You must leave that to me?—I know something about it.

Rent on a sliding scale.

5410. You advocate a sliding scale for rent?—I do.

5411. I suppose you think it is necessary to alleviate agricultural distress?—I think something is necessary. We want something more done than we have at present.

5412. You said it would be a good thing to make it compulsory between landlord and tenant?—No, I have not said it would be. I do not say compulsory.

5413. You withdraw it?—Because the landlords and tenants are quite capable of managing their own business.

5414. But if it is a good thing, why should not it be compulsory?—I should not go so far as that.

5415. Why not?—If the landlord thinks, or the tenant thinks, it is not to benefit him, let him take his chance.

5416. But supposing the one thought it would benefit him, and the other that it would not, would you make it compulsory?—No.

5417. Would you let things go on as they are?—No, I should not; I should establish the sliding scale, and it would not be very long before everybody would adopt it.

5418. But if you think it desirable, do not you think it would be wise to make it compulsory?—No; it is going a little too far, I think.

5419. But surely it is very desirable if it would settle the land question for the next 50 years?—Yes; it would be very desirable.

5420. Do not you think it would be wise to make it compulsory?—To make it compulsory not to fix that.

Land courts.

5421. Why do you disapprove of land courts for fixing the rent?—Because the landlords and tenants are quite capable of doing their own business. What do we get from the experience of Ireland. They have had a land court, and they are now going to have a new valuation, which will cost a very large sum of money.

5422. I will not go into the question of Ireland; there is a question of dual control, but this would not involve the question of dual control, but only the fixing of a fair rent?—Quite so.

5423. Do you think that would be inadvisable?—Yes.

The fixing of rents.

5424. How are the farms let?—At their value.

5425. How is the value arrived at?—By men who understand the value of land; not by a man walking along the road and looking over the hedge, but by practical men.

5426. Do the farmers go and offer a certain sum of money over their competitors?—We do not let the land in that kind of way in Derbyshire, but if the farm is to be let it is so much, and if you go and apply for it, and you do not like to give the rent, there is no higgling about the valuation.

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5427. You fix the rent?—I fix the rent.

5428. And if the farmer thinks it is too high, you do not let the farmer have it. How do you know that it is not too high?—I know sufficient of my valuation.

Competition for farms.

5429. I suppose you have plenty of competition for farms?—Yes.

5430. More farmers than farms?—Yes.

5431. There are?—Good landlords have never any trouble.

5432. There are more farmers than farms? If you had to let a farm you would get two or three applicants?—Yes; I know a farm at liberty, and I believe I will get twelve applicants for it.

5433. Do you think those twelve applicants competing for one farm would not be induced, in the desire to get into a holding, to offer possibly more rent than they can afford to pay?—They would; no doubt of it; plenty of them.

The fixing of rent.

5434. Would not it be a good thing then to have a fair rent fixed?—The fair rent is fixed already.

5435. Then you fix the rent yourself?—I do. I do not put them up by auction.

5436. That is equivalent to a fixity of rent?—You are speaking now of putting them up by auction, and giving the farm to the highest bidder. We do not do that.

5437. I want to put this point. Supposing that 12 men are competing for one farm, do not you think that those men are apt to give more than they could actually afford, merely for the advantage of getting into a holding?—It is not a question of giving more. The rent is fixed.

5438. And therefore you have constituted yourself a land court?—No, I think not.

5439. But if you fix the rent you must have?—It is not a land court. I think nobody knows better the value of the property than the owner.

5440. You are an experienced man, and I have no doubt that you make a very fair valuation of farms in your neighbourhood. In fact I believe you do let them by your own valuation?—I do.

5441. Supposing then you constituted the referee yourself, do you think you would fix any more than the fair rent?—I think not.

5442. Would any other man fix more than a fair rent?—I do not think so.

5443. Therefore there is not much objection to the outside court?—Yes, very great objection.

5444. You are the court at present?—What good would it be to appoint a court? I think you come from the West of England. If you were to bring a man from the West of England, or from London, to Derbyshire, to fix the rent in Derbyshire, he would not know anything about it.

Reduction of rent.

5445. I would say a competent, experienced man in the neighbourhood; no official valuer would be other than that. You say that rents have decreased 20 per cent.?—20 to 25 per cent.

Decrease in agricultural produce.

5446. How much has agricultural produce decreased in the same term in proportion?—I cannot tell you that.

5447. You cannot tell me how much beef, mutton, and wheat have decreased in per-centage?—I do not think mutton has decreased very much.

5448. Mutton has not decreased?—I think not.

5449. Has beef decreased?—Very little.

5450. How much has wheat decreased?—Derbyshire is not a wheat-growing county.

5451. Therefore you have nothing to complain of?—Not as far as wheat goes. We do not want free trade.

5452. That being the case with beef and mutton; and you do not grow wheat?—We depend on milk.

5453. How much has the price of milk decreased?—About 20 per cent.

Farms highly rented.

5454. You said just now that some farms were let over their value?—Yes, plenty.

5455. What do you mean by let over their value?—They are let over their value.

5456. By what system?—They are old tenancies, and very likely the rents have not been lowered to meet the times.

5457. Why?—I cannot answer that.

5458. The want of application from the tenant?—I suppose so.

5459. (*Lord Cobham.*) Is that largely the case?—Not largely.

5460. (*Mr. Lambert.*) But in this case do not you think it would be fair that a farmer, a sitting tenant, who has farmed for many years, and if the landlord has not given him a reduction, he should take him to a court of appeal whereby he could get that reduction?—What do you want with a land court? I will give you a lease of 21 years in Derbyshire, and if you are tired at the end of seven years, or at the end of 14 years, you or I shall have power to give notice to quit, and pay for improvements.

5461. Certainly; but is it not a fact that farmers do lose money on changing farms?—But that is not always the landlord's fault, is it?

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

5462. Is the Agricultural Holdings Act in force in your district?—Yes.

5463. It is?—Yes.

Permanent improvements.

5464. Why do the landlords not make the improvements necessary on the farms?—They do, a great many of them.

5465. Are there any that do not?—A few, and there always have been a few.

5466. If the landlord did not make the improvements, what then?—Why, they ought to go undone.

5467. Undone?—Yes; why should a tenant who has not got money to cultivate the land spend his money in permanent improvements.

5468. But supposing he has got money enough to spend on permanent improvements?—I should not allow them to do it then nine times out of ten, and particularly drainage.

5469. Supposing it is done well?—But it is not very often done well.

5470. Supposing it was done well?—I would agree to it. If I was umpire when the tenant left, and I did not think the farm was in good order, I should not give a penny.

5471. Presuming that the landlord has not money himself, would not you give a tenant who has plenty, and who is desirous to make quite necessary improvements, power to do so?—I should not. It is not a part of his business.

Scheme for fixing rent.

5472. (*Mr. Channing.*) I wanted to ask you, have you any farms let on your estates on the scheme which you have suggested?—No.

5473. I think you said it was not very favourably received?—Not at all.

Sliding scale on corn rents.

5474. You are aware of the experiment tried in the way of a revival of the corn rents by Lord Tollemache in Suffolk?—Yes.

5475. And perhaps you are aware too that that has not worked very favourably in this very bad corn year?—No, it was not likely to. No system of sliding scale could work unless it was on a broad basis, and included the whole produce of the farm. A sliding scale on corn rents would not be of any use.

5476. You attribute the dissatisfaction which I understand is felt by the working of farms on leases to its being confined to the corn averages only?—Yes, I do not think it could work on the corn average.

5477. But in carrying out your scheme, is it not obvious that you have not official figures enough in the market prices to settle a scheme satisfactorily to start with?—No.

5478. For instance, in England you have not, as in Scotland, the feuar's system?—Would not that be easily obtained from the Board of Agriculture?

5479. What I want to ask you is this, whether you do not think that a great deal will have to be done in the way of shaping the universal sale of corn by weight, the sale of cattle by weight, and other reforms before you get statistics sufficiently accurate?—Quite so.

5480. I understand you to say in answer to various questions of Mr. Lambert about rents, that you do not put up your farms to auction?—No.

The fixing of rent.

5481. Do you fairly assess what you consider to be the agricultural value, taking it year by year, of the produce to be got off those farms?—Yes.

5482. That is the system upon which you let them?—Yes.

Compensation to outgoing tenants.

5483. You are willing to let them on a 21 years' lease, with a seven years' break, and a valuation at that time of what may be due to the tenant for his improvements whether he quits or not?—If it is under a sliding scale, but not without.

5484. If you begin with your fair valuation to begin with—I quite understand you to mean that?—Yes.

5485. But you spoke of paying the sitting tenant a capital sum. Would you also accept the suggestion of Sir James Caird that the payment to the sitting tenant should be by a proportionate deduction in the future rent?—I should be willing to do that. It would come to the same thing so long as you ascertain the amount due to the sitting tenant or the flitting tenant, at the expiration of the tenancy—it would be immaterial.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

5486. You have had experience of valuations under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

5487. For both sides?—Yes.

Claims and counter-claim.

5488. What is your opinion as to the universal allegation that putting in counter-claims frightens tenants from using the Act?—I do not think so.

5489. In your opinion it is not so?—I think myself that the notices are very important to both sides. It does not matter what the amount is that is sent in. It does not bias the umpire, or whoever settles the matter, in the slightest degree.

5490. By "notice" you mean claims?—I mean notice. The tenant sends in his notice of claim, and the landlord sends in a counter notice. That does not bias the settlement of the valuation. I have settled a great many of those kind of cases.

5491. As a matter of fact you are aware that a great many of those landlords' counter-claims in references under the Act are very largely cut down?—And so are the claims on the other side.

5492. Would you be in favour of restricting the counter-claims made by the landlord, either by the terms of the lease, or by some specific proof of the actual damage caused?—No, I think the valuer is the man to settle the amount of claim of both sides. If two valuers are appointed, and they do not agree, they appoint an umpire.

5493. I do not think you appreciate my point. The tenant is tied down to the specific terms of the schedules by the Agricultural Holdings Act, whereas the landlord is perfectly free to make all the claims that can be made out of the general principles of law as to waste?—Yes, he has a perfect right. Why should his property be deteriorated and the tenant escape?

5494. Would not it save litigation, and also be fairer to both sides, if the actual state of repair, the condition of the fields, and the condition of repairs of buildings and fences, and so on, were scheduled at the beginning of the lease, so that the counter-claims may be limited by this sort of inventory of the farm?—You limit them now. You cannot go beyond four years.

5495. But a good deal may happen in four years. Could not you schedule the condition of the buildings, and the fences, and everything about the farm, by an inventory at the beginning of the tenancy, and then limit the counter-claims to specific losses or damage from that point of view?—I do not think so.

Time-scale for valuing improvements.

5496. Do you approve of a time-scale for valuing tenants' improvements under the third part of the schedule?—A scale?

5497. The time-scale for the exhaustion of improvements?—Well, I do not altogether approve of it, though it is generally carried out, because it is an easy system, but in nine times out of ten it is the incoming tenant who is the sufferer, not the outgoing man—he almost invariably gets more than belongs to him, and is too apt to get back more than the unexhausted value of his improvements. I think Sir John Lawes pretty well settled that question that the unexhausted value is not so very much after all. The way that we do—we have a very large association in the Midland counties—we take the two last years of the tenancy, and allow one-fourth for cake, and allow an eighth for meal.

5498. What do you allow for manures?—It depends upon what they are.

5499. Have you a time-scale for all the manures?—Yes.

5500. Then you do apply the time-scale in your association?—Yes, we take it as a maximum.

5501. Could you put in your time-scale?—Yes.

5502. It would be desirable to have it—the Norfolk scale is known?—Quite so.

Low prices.

5503. (*Mr. Everett.*) You told Mr. Shaw Lefevre that the low price of corn was a benefit to the Derbyshire farmers?—I think it is.

5504. Then why is it that your rents have had to be put down from 20 to 25 per cent? It is not the high price of corn—it gets lower and lower?—The low prices of dairy produce.

5505. The fall in prices on the whole has hurt trade?—Yes, and the owners of store stock have been hit hard.

5506. And the lower price of the other produce on the farm has hurt you more than the low price of corn has benefited you?—Yes.

Rent on a sliding scale.

5507. With regard to those produce rents, your idea is that rents should be based, to begin with, on the natural capacity of the land and to rise or fall with the altered prices of produce?—I think it is the fairest way.

5508. Are you aware in the second quarter of this century produce rents were exceedingly common in England?—No, I did not know that. They were common in Scotland.

5509. They were in the eastern part of England?—But they did not go far enough. They were confined to cereal produce. We have got beyond that point now; you must include everything.

5510. And those produce rents all went out in the good times of farming. From 1853 to 1873 both tenants and landlords preferred to be on a money rather than on a produce basis, but now they are coming back to produce rents?—They are coming in, are they?

5511. Yes. Lord Tollemache's estate has set such a system in operation. I might point out that when these produce rents came into fashion in the second quarter of the century, it was when we were experiencing a great fall in produce from the first part of the century, similar to what we have had in the last 15 years, and produce rents went out again, when prices were looking up the landlord was quite content then with a lease, because at each renewal of the lease he let his land at a higher price and the farmer too, because as prices rose he could pay his rent more easily; and now we have come into a second great period of fall, and the farmer cries out "Don't fix me "in terms of money now; I do not know where I am; "I would rather have the value of my produce as my "rent than have a fixed money term?"—Yes.

Improvement in stock.

5512. (*Lord Vernon.*) You say greater attention should be devoted to improvement of the stock on the farm?—Yes, by using better bulls, and rearing more stock.

5513. Who is to provide the bulls?—The landlord should provide some of them.

State loans.

5514. Then you spoke of cheaper money. You say that advances should be made by the State at 3 per cent., do not you?—Yes.

5515. Do not you think it would be much simpler in cases where they could do it if trustees were allowed to advance money for improvements which they raised?—I should be quite willing to do that.

5516. It would be an improvement on Lord Cairns' Settled Estates Act, do not you think?—Yes.

5517. You mean, instead of being applied to the sale of property to realise money for improvements, they should be allowed to raise money for improvements for themselves, and might so save all the unnecessary expense that they would be put to by the Lands Improvement Company?—That would meet my views.

Valuers.

5518. Well then I am not going to the question of a sliding scale for rents. Do not you think that both for the working of the Agricultural Holdings Act and even for such a scheme as you have proposed, it would be a good thing if surveyors or valuers for England should be appointed by the Board of Agriculture, who have vast experience?—I think so.

5519. In fact you think the surveyor or valuer could settle the arbitration under the Agricultural Holdings Act without having two men?—Yes.

Income tax.

5520. Do not you think it would be advisable that landowners should pay income tax after having deducted a certain per-centage for repairs on their property, instead of paying on the gross income, that they should not pay it on the gross income but on the income they receive after deducting money spent on repairs?—Yes, I think so. That is one point I missed. The best landlords, the men who spend the most in improving their properties, suffer very much from that very thing, because by spending a lot of money on drainage and buildings they enable the rents to be kept up, and they have to pay income tax, property tax, and rates on the higher rents, so that they are the men who are paying on their own improvements, that is the liberal landlords.

5521. That is what I mean. Although you say that you do not approve of abolishing the law of entail, at the same time do not you think that there are too many restrictions upon the tenant for life?—Yes.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

Eleventh Day.

Friday, 15th December 1893.

PRESENT:

The RIGHT HON. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. Baron VERNON.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
WALTER HUME LONG, Esq., M.P.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
FREEMAN THOMAS, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. JAMES RANKIN, M.P., called and examined.

Mr. J. Rankin, M.P.
15 Dec. 1893.

5522. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You are the member for the Leominster Division of Herefordshire, are you not?—Yes, that is the northern portion of the county.

5523. You are well acquainted with the agricultural condition of that county?—I am.

Depression in Herefordshire.

5524. Is there widespread depression among agriculturalists in Herefordshire?—Yes, I may say that there is.

5525. In all branches of agriculture?—Not so much in the cattle branch as in the arable, the corn-growing districts.

Character of cultivation.

5526. What is the general character of the agriculture in that county?—Some years ago it was very nearly half and half arable and pasture, pasture upon the whole predominating; now pasture very largely predominates in a large portion of the county. The Ross district was very productive arable land, very good wheat and clover land. It is now considerably out of cultivation, or rather high cultivation, and there is a great deal of depression and of course distress. The northern portion of the county, especially the land by the sides of the rivers, is mostly rich pasture land, and has not suffered nearly so much.

5527. In the arable cultivation is much wheat grown?—Yes, there used to be a considerable amount of wheat land and a certain amount of barley, but wheat was the larger crop.

5528. That is the case at the present time?—Yes, the proportion of wheat is still the larger.

Decrease in wheat growing.

5529. And there is a considerable amount of wheat grown still in the county?—Well, I think I may say considerable, but it is declining very much. I think during the last 10 years there has certainly been a decline of between 20,000 and 30,000 acres of grain growing.

5530. It is in those districts where arable cultivation prevails that you have found the distress to be greatest?—The fall in rents has been much the greatest in those portions.

Difficulty in letting.

5531. When farms are vacant are there difficulties in getting new tenants?—Generally speaking there are. Of late years great difficulty.

5532. Is any of the land in the hands of the owners?—A great deal of it now is in the hands of the owners. I have had myself during the last 10 years two or three farms beyond my own home farms constantly in my hands.

5533. Where the land is being cultivated by the owners themselves is it because they are unable to get the tenants at all, or is it because they cannot get the tenants at the rent they desire?—Both those causes, no doubt, operate, but in my case very frequently I could not get a tenant at all.

5534. In fact when you have had a vacant farm you had no offer at all for it?—No offer at all.

Uncultivated land.

5535. Is there any land that you are aware of in the county that is out of cultivation altogether?—No, I think not. I am not aware of any land that can be said to have gone out of cultivation altogether, excepting so far that some land has been planted with larch and other trees and withdrawn from arable cultivation.

Depression in Herefordshire.

5536. But your general description of the condition of agriculture in that county would be that it is one of great depression?—It is; but I would qualify that by saying that I do not think that the depression in Herefordshire is as great as in many other counties in this country.

Fall in prices.

5537. What is your opinion as to the cause of that depression?—The fall in the price of wheat and in other cereals. Up to 1882 the price of wheat was almost constantly above 40*s.* per quarter. It is in Herefordshire under 30*s.* per quarter at present.

5538. Are the prices of other agricultural produce depreciated in that district in anything like the same proportion?—In nothing like the same proportion. In fact the prices of cattle have been very fair until the last two years. In the beginning of last year there was a sudden fall in the price of cattle which was very bad for producers of cattle in the county. Up to that time the producers of cattle were fairly remunerated. This is a cattle-breeding county; there are very few brought into the county, but a great many are sold out of it, and they have been doing fairly well as far as their cattle is concerned. The well-bred Herefordshire cattle have always commanded good prices.

Foreign competition and freightage.

5539. And to what do you attribute the fall in the price of grain?—To foreign competition almost entirely, and to the lessening of freights which is also produced by competition in tonnage.

Fruit growing.

5540. Are there any peculiarities in the depression of Herefordshire that you would wish to refer to?—I do not think there are any peculiarities, except that the distress in Herefordshire has, in my opinion, been ameliorated by the fact that they have a breed of cattle which until recently they have easily been able to dispose of at fair prices. They have also had a considerable number of hops which have saved farmers in bad years very frequently; and also that it is a great fruit-growing county, which has given a value to land which would not without it have had a value. For instance, this year I find upon my own farm that I have had about 30 tons of apples. Prices, no doubt, have been very poor—about 1*l.* a ton—but nevertheless that means 30*l.* produced over 12 acres of orchard. That is in itself 2*l.* 10*s.* per acre, which helps to make the rent and profit.

5541. Where this fruit cultivation is carried on, I understand that the position is less unfavourable than where it is not?—Much more so. Of course that applies to a larger extent to small holdings, and even to the cottage gardens, than it does to the large farms. The proportion of fruit grown upon the small holdings, the cottage holdings, is nearly always greater than in proportion to large farms.

Small holdings.

5542. As to the small holdings, are they numerous in the county?—Yes, they are.

5543. Do they form a substantial feature in the agriculture of the county?—They do.

Allotments.

5544. Will you tell us your views about allotments and gardens; are the cottages well supplied with gardens as a rule?—They are almost invariably well supplied with gardens, so much so that there is no demand for allotments, or almost no demand for allotments. When I speak of allotments I use it in the technical term, under one acre. I have offered my tenants any number of allotments they chose to take. I have not got more than half-a-dozen applications, but the reason is that the good gardens attached to their cottages are the most convenient kind of allotment.

5545. (*Lord Cobham.*) How large are the allotments?—They vary from half an acre; but they are generally three-quarters of an acre.

5546. Is that general throughout the county?—I cannot say, positively, throughout the county. Probably throughout the county the gardens are, as a rule, less than half an acre, but that is as much as a labourer can conveniently work.

Fruit growing.

5547. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) And in those gardens which they cultivate, do many of them grow fruit?—That is very generally the case.

5548. And that helps them very greatly?—It does. One of my cottage tenants told me that he had sold in one year 20*l.* worth of fruit from his garden; that is an obvious help, for it is equal to 8*s.* per week.

5549. What is the size of the garden?—That is but a small one, barely half an acre, but there the fruit included small fruit, such as strawberries.

5550. Could that fruit-growing, as far as you are able to judge, be extended?—Yes, I should say that it could. There is still a large market for almost all fruits, except perhaps apples. In a plentiful year, such as we have had this year, apples are a drug in the market. They could not be disposed of at a higher price on the ground than 1*l.* a ton.

5551. Do the fruit-growers also suffer from foreign competition?—Not in the county, but of course it tells upon them if they send their fruit, which they mostly do, to the large centres. Birmingham is a very common centre for sending the fruit from Herefordshire, and Cardiff is also a market, and in those cases they do suffer to a certain extent from foreign competition.

5552. In spite of foreign competition there is still fruit-growing, but is it considerable?—Yes.

5553. Are not they liable to great loss from unfavourable seasons; does that often occur?—Not very often; of course, the price improves when the crop is small.

5554. It is sometimes the case, is it not, in the fruit-growing country, that an unfortunate frost at a bad time of the year is very prejudicial indeed to the crop?—Certainly. Three or four years ago, I forget exactly which year, the crop of apples in Herefordshire was entirely destroyed by the winter moth, the female of which crawls up the tree and deposits its eggs in the branches, and these are developed into the caterpillar in the spring, and in that year they entirely destroyed the crop.

5555. As far as you are able to give information to the Commission, is there any considerable hope of agriculture in the direction of fruit growing in other counties with which you are acquainted?—I should say there is to a considerable extent.

Condition of the labourer.

5556. Can you tell us how the labourers have been affected by agricultural depression in that county; has it led to a reduction of employment, or to a reduction in wages?—It has led to a very small reduction in wages. A very considerable rise in wages took place in Herefordshire, and, I believe, all over the country in 1872 and 1873, owing to causes which I daresay I need not go into, and that rise has, with a very small decrease, been maintained ever since. But there is one special reason, I think, which has affected Herefordshire, and I daresay some of the border counties of Wales, and that is the extraordinary prosperity of the mining works in South Wales during the last six years, up till this last year. The prosperity which came to South Wales has undoubtedly drawn away a great many of our labouring class to Monmouthshire and Glamorganshire, where they have had good wages, and that, of course, has reduced the number of labourers in the county, and that has been the cause of the maintenance of higher wages.

Condition of tenants.

5557. Now what have been the effects of the depression on tenant farmers?—A loss of their capital has been one effect—making them take farms with insufficient capital; and a consequent loss of profit has been the result.

Reduction in rent.

5558. Have there been any reductions of rent to meet this?—I should say, upon the whole, there has been from 25 to 30 per cent. reduction in rents. Upon my own property the reduction is, on the whole, a little over 20 per cent., but that also includes the cottages, and some of the smaller holdings, which have not been so much affected.

5559. To that extent the landlords in that part of England have been injured likewise?—Certainly.

Expenditure on improvements.

5560. Have you found it to be the case, or generally the case, that in addition to the reduction of rent they have been called upon to make greater outlays on the estate for improvements and additions?—From personal experience I cannot say that there has been any lessening of it; the same demands, and greater demands, have been made by the tenants, and to get satisfactory tenants the landlords have been obliged to make those little outlays.

5561. At the same time, with this considerable reduction of rent, there has been an increased demand for outlay on the part of the landlords?—I should say that was the case generally.

Cost of production.

5562. Is there anything in your view which could be done to lessen the cost of production on arable land?—Well, I really cannot suggest that anything can be done by the farmer; that is to say, to lessen the cost of production. Of course I am not now speaking of what the State might do for him, but what he himself can do.

Suggested remedies to alleviate depression.

5563. Have you any suggestions to make with regard to the State, of what might be done by the State?—The only thing that I can suggest is, that the State might give a little more help in the way of the charges which now fall upon real property, and the one thing I should like to see done by the State more than it does now, is to help the establishment charges of our Poor Law system. I would not recommend the State giving any grant for indoor paupers, because that would militate directly against my view of the Poor Law, I should not like to do anything to induce the guardians to put paupers in the unions when they otherwise would not do so. But the establishment charges, which are pretty well fixed charges, whether the workhouse is full or half empty, I should like to see aided to a greater extent than is done at present, by Imperial funds. I also think where there is a school board that some help might be given to that rate. I think the Merchandise Marks Act might possibly be extended to foreign meat, and other things, and I think also (but of course this probably will be called a fad of my own) that an old age pension system might be introduced, which ought, to some extent, receive help from Imperial funds. I also think that bi-metallism, if introduced, would to a small extent help the farmer and the landlord.

5564. Those are what you are now suggesting as remedies for agricultural depression?—Yes, as remedies, but I do not wish to be misunderstood. I do not think that any of them, or all of them put together, would have any very great effect.

Import duties.

5565. What, in your opinion, would be the real remedy for this depression?—Well, from the farmer's point of view, and the landlord's point of view, of course nothing short of a Protective Duty would be an efficient remedy.

Fall in prices.

5566. Your view is this, I gather then; that the real cause of agricultural depression has been the fall in prices, and the real remedy for it would be a rise in prices?—Yes, certainly, from the farmer's point of view. I am not now speaking from a national point of view.

Tenants capital.

5567. Have you anything to tell us upon the subject of tenants' capital in Herefordshire. Are the tenant farmers usually supplied now with adequate capital for the purposes of their farms?—No, in my opinion they are not. The farmer's capital, I am sorry to say, has decreased very largely, and now the tenants have not got 5*l.* an acre of capital, whereas they had formerly very nearly 10*l.* an acre.

5568. A portion of their capital, in the course of a series of bad years, has gradually disappeared?—It has gradually disappeared.

5569. In the case of tenants who take new occupations, they have not usually adequate capital, is that so?—I do not think they have, but landlords have to take them, or farm the land themselves.

5570. They have to take them with insufficient capital, because they cannot get tenants who have enough?—Yes.

5571. And that is a great hindrance to successful cultivation?—Undoubtedly.

Tenure.

5572. Under what tenure do farmers in your district of Herefordshire usually hold their farms?—Almost always by yearly tenancies.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

5573. Under the Agricultural holdings Act, or under agreement?—Very largely now, I believe, under the Agricultural Holdings Act. There is hardly any agreement, except that as to the rent, and the conditions are those implied by the Agricultural Holdings Act. The tenure is nearly always from the 2nd of February, Candlemas, and the farm is taken with a year's notice.

5574. Do you find any complaints of the Agricultural Holdings Act, or any demands for greater security than that given by it for compensation for improvements?—I have never had one from a tenant farmer—never one. To show how little that Act is in operation, I made the inquiry of the County Court judge, and I find in two years he has only had one case in his circuit, which is Circuit 27, and which includes Herefordshire and parts of Shropshire, and only one case under this Act has been brought into his court.

5575. Then I understand that farmers, as a rule, hold their farms under agreements which are partly based upon the Act?—That very likely is the case; but I think the reason is, that they find they could make better terms with their landlords when going out than under the terms of the Act, and perhaps also it is the fact that owing to the notice that has to be given, which I think is two months' notice, before they quit their tenancy, some of them neglect to give that notice, and then find that they are out of Court, but I do not think that the Act applies very much. I think it is a fact that they make much better terms with the landlord than with the Court.

The law of distraint.

5576. Have you found any tenants asking for alteration in the law of distraint?—I think occasionally in years gone by you heard expressions of that kind, but I do not think the farmers find it a hard law upon them. Other creditors besides the landlord sometimes might do so, but the farmer himself is not affected by it.

5577. What is your opinion as to what would be the effect of the abolition of the law of distraint; would it be advantageous or prejudicial to the interests of the farmer?—It certainly would be prejudicial, especially nowadays, in the case of unsubstantial tenants, because the landlord would have to demand rent in advance. In Herefordshire there is a custom which is not altogether usual throughout the whole of the county, of the outgoing tenant being allowed to plant one-third of his arable land with a crop of wheat, and this, of course, is to a great extent security for the landlord, so that if he does leave the farm without paying the last half-year, or year's rent, there is some security left upon the ground, and it is a custom which both landlords and farmers seem to like and find beneficial.

Restrictions in agreements.

5578. Now, with regard to the disposal of the farm produce crops, is it customary in Herefordshire for restrictions to be imposed upon its disposal?—With regard to straw it is so. There I think that some arrangement ought to be come to, for straw, as we all know, is a mere vehicle for manure, and has not a very high manurial value in itself, and therefore it does seem to me rather a pity that a commodity which at the present time is realizing some 3*l.* a ton should be obliged to be used only in a way which greatly depreciates its value.

5579. You would apply that observation especially to those cases where there are great facilities for its disposal in the neighbourhood of towns?—Certainly; and of course with the stipulation that some manurial value should be put upon the farm.

5580. Are these restrictions usually rigidly enforced at the present time, or have they been in a great many instances relaxed?—I do not think they are relaxed as far as the agreements are concerned; I know of several instances where a remission has been made in the terms of the agreement.

5581. In practice then the restrictions are relaxed?—Yes.

5582. Although the agreements have not been altered?—No.

5583. Is there anything else you would like to say?—I do not know that there is.

Size of farms.

5584. (*Lord Cobham.*) I do not think you told us what the ordinary size of a farm in Herefordshire is; between what limits would they run?—Very few farms are over 500 acres, most of them are from 150 to 200 acres; but there are a large number of farms under 50 acres. I find on my own estate, which is about 3,300 acres, that I have about half and half; half the number of holdings under 50 acres, and half the number of holdings over 50 acres, and I do not think there is anything peculiar in that.

Small holdings.

5585. What sort of people occupy the smaller holdings; people who live entirely on the farm, and by the farm?—People who live entirely by the farm; and the work is done by themselves and their families, but of course that does not apply to holdings when they get down to less than 10 acres. Then, of course, they are held by small tradesmen, or they are taken by a man who goes out hedging and ditching, or he is a drainer.

5586. These would be agricultural labourers' holdings of from 5 to 10 acres?—Yes; there are a great many held by agricultural labourers, but I think the majority are not agricultural labourers, strictly so called, they are more job men.

Fruit growing.

5587. Do you consider that orchards are generally managed with intelligence?—I am afraid I cannot say that I do think so. But we have instituted technical classes there upon that subject, and other subjects. I happen to be the Chairman of the Technical Education Committee, and I am glad to say that lectures upon the management and pruning of orchards, and providing the best kinds of apples to plant, are now receiving a great deal of attention, and I have not the slightest doubt that if intelligence is brought to bear upon these matters, that the fruit growing possibilities and potentialities of Herefordshire or any county will enormously increase.

5588. Are there many orchards in a shocking condition?—There are many in a shocking condition.

5589. Do you teach the making of cider as well?—Yes; that is also a branch of learning that is taught.

5590. When Mr. Chaplin spoke of a heavy loss in connexion with the apple crop, I suppose you meant the crop itself is liable to become a total loss?—Yes.

5591. You would not say of the apples, as of hops, that a very large loss is involved in the cultivation?—No; because for the most part there is no money spent upon the cultivation at all. There is nothing spent upon the orchards very often.

5592. As a rule the orchard is generally in a pasture?—Yes, in a pasture. There are many arable orchards, also.

Tenants' capital.

5593. Would you say, compared with 10 or 12 years ago, that a farmer should have the same capital as he needed then?—Yes, to farm in as efficient a manner I should say that he ought, and of course as most farms are being put down to more grass, he requires more money to stock them properly, or he requires quite as much money.

Payment of compensation.

5594. Would you say that since the depression began, the amount ordinarily paid to the outgoing tenant has increased or diminished?—You mean by the incoming tenant to the outgoing tenant?

5595. Yes?—I should say, upon the whole, it has decreased.

5596. Very largely, probably?—Yes.

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5597. To that extent the farmer's need for capital is diminished?—Quite so.

Competition for farms.

5598. As to the fixing of rents where there is only one competitor for a farm, practically the rent in that case is almost fixed by the competitor?—Almost. I need hardly say to gentlemen who must be so well versed in the matter, that it does not generally pay a landlord who has a farm thrown on his hands in a bad condition, for it takes two or three years to restore it to a condition to make it lettable.

5599. Have you not been able to get even one competitor for a farm?—Yes, very often.

5600. That is the case with many of your neighbours?—Certainly.

Uncultivated land.

5601. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I think you said a certain amount of land has gone out of cultivation. Is that upon the usually good soil of Herefordshire?—What, I think, I said was that I did not know of any land that has gone out of cultivation altogether, except in so far that a certain amount—I cannot give the exact acreage—has been planted by larch and other trees, which I should not call going out of cultivation. But a large amount of land has been put out of arable cultivation.

5602. And laid down to grass?—And laid down to grass.

5603. That would be because it would be more profitable to raise cattle than to grow corn?—Yes, but I do not think any land has gone out of cultivation.

Character of soil.

5604. I wanted to ask that question, because from my knowledge of Herefordshire, taking it generally, I know that the soil is very good, and that it has not suffered like a great deal of light land elsewhere?—That is quite true.

5605. But that the soil of Herefordshire is extremely well adapted for fruit-growing, being a great deal on the red sandstone?—It is all the red sandstone epoch, except in some small part of it, which is the silurian. Some part of it is heavy clay, and other portions sandy loam.

Cattle breeding.

5606. And the Herefordshire farmer goes in for cattle breeding very much, as there is a demand for that kind of cattle; but is not the reason of that in a great measure due to the fact that they are not bred elsewhere?—That is so. During the early years of the last decade, 1882–3–4, the demand for Herefordshire cattle was very high indeed. I have got a few figures with regard to that from my own farm. I have had a very good herd of Herefords for many years. Taking 1885, the average price per head, and they were mostly yearlings, was 65*l.* 19*s.* 8*d.*, and the next year it had fallen very considerably, but no doubt that was owing to the fact of their being inferior animals. In 1888 and 1889 they had fallen to 43*l.* and 46*l.* a head, and this last year they were only 23*l.*, and this year only 18*l.* But, of course, those are only general figures, and only from my farm.

5607. But your herd is a pedigree herd?—Yes.

5608. And in good years you sold to the foreign market, to go to America and elsewhere?—Certainly.

5609. You cannot take that as a usual tenant farmers' price?—Certainly not; but still there are a great many farmers in Herefordshire with pedigree herds, and they have had those prices.

Hop growing.

5610. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Do you think the hop industry might be extended in Herefordshire?—I should think it might. I am not a hop grower myself, and therefore my evidence is altogether second-hand. But I have never found any of my hop agricultural friends to be very sanguine about the question of hops. I have found in certain years, when other things had failed, the hops were very profitable, and they certainly have saved a great many farmers perhaps from utter bankruptcy.

5611. I think there are about 5,000 acres of hops in Herefordshire?—There are 6,797.

5612. And that acreage is extended in small plots over a great many farms?—The chief hop-growing area is between Hereford and Ledbury, and extends up to Bromyard. There is hardly any in the south, which is a sandy loam soil. There is a little up in the west, but the north-east of Herefordshire is where the hops are chiefly grown.

5613. (*Lord Cobham.*) Mostly in the valley of the Teme?—No, the valley of the Frome.

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5614. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Have not the prices of hops been rather low considering the small crops grown in this country?—I find the average price this year is 5*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* for Herefordshire hops, and the yield was 9 cwt. Well, that, of course, is a good yielding crop, and a good paying crop, for it fetched 52*l.* 19*s.* for the acre and the cost of cultivation is about 34*l.* per acre.

5615. Taking the country through, the crop was very much smaller than in your favoured district of Herefordshire?—I believe it was.

5616. Is it not likely that foreign competition will interfere with the price of hops?—That is very likely.

5617. Have your hop growers any special grievances?—Their grievance is the same grievance as the wheat growers, that they do not like foreign competition. I have never heard any other special grievance which could be applied to hops.

Cider making.

5618. With regard to cider making, have you any factories to which small growers can send their fruit?—Hardly any. That would be a very great improvement. We have not anything of that kind for cider; nor creameries where small dairy keepers can send their milk to. I believe it would be a very great improvement for the county if such were introduced.

5619. If you made a better kind of cider it would be saleable, would it not?—Yes, it would be a great improvement. The majority of the cider made is very poor stuff indeed; the best cider is first rate, and as wholesome and good a drink as can be found anywhere.

The Merchandise Marks Act.

5620. (*Mr. Giffen.*) I should like you to explain a little as to what you wished with regard to the Merchandise Act that you spoke of. What was the point of your remark?—Well, I am a little bit afraid of entering upon that question, because it has so many sides. I only put it forward as a suggestion. It has been clamoured for by the farmers themselves to a very large extent, but I have heard reasons on the other side which make me doubt very much whether it is a remedy of very much value. The remedy desired by the farmer is that the purveyors of foreign meat should have some distinctive mark to show that they were purveyors of foreign meat, and that foreign meat should not be sold as English meat. I have heard, on the other hand, that it might be, if the distinction was known to consumers and they found that the foreign meat was very often as good as the English meat, that the price of English meat might decline.

5521. My difficulty is that the contention would be, on the other side, that the Merchandise Marks Act in a sense already applies to foreign meat with false marks, and to bring it into this country with false marks of origin would be a breach of the Merchandise Marks Act; and what is contended for is something that may be in accordance with the principle of the Act but goes a little beyond it?—What I mean is that the extension of the Act should be made to apply so that there should be no doubt that foreign meat was being sold.

5622. That is to say, that you should compel the marking of the meat, not merely that the marks are true, but to compel the marking of all foreign meat?—Either the marking of the meat or that so-and-so sells foreign meat.

5623. But you doubt whether it would be beneficial to the farmers' interest, and you do not attach much importance to it?—I do not attach much importance to it.

Bi-metallism.

5624. In what way do you say that bi-metallism is to help agriculture—in what way would it help it at all?—That is a very large question, but I will take the bi-metallist view of this case, that the ratio is fixed at its old ratio. If it is not so fixed of course the value to the farmer would be gone; if the ratio went back to the 15½ to 1 the remedy would have some effect as far as prices are concerned. But supposing that it would not be permitted to fix the ratio higher than the ratio is at present; then I would say that the change to the farmer would be of no value, because it would raise the present low prices. I am afraid I am a little obscure in my first sentence, but the way I think it acts at present is this: In India a man with 20*s.* in his pocket can buy now certainly more bushels of wheat than he could when the rupee was of the value of 2*s.* I was in India last winter and made inquiries and went into the prices of wheat, and I found that it was very much the same, or a little more than it was when the rupee was much higher. Therefore, it is obvious that the pound will buy more corn than it did formerly. When I say the pound I say the commodities which are represented by English money, and which have all gone up in value since the rupee has gone down in value. The freights being also very low at the present time, no doubt there is an inducement to Indian exporters to send their corn out of the country because labour is very cheap—it is still very cheap in India—and the power of production is very much the same, and the purchaser can buy more of the grain, and therefore can afford to sell it at a cheaper value in this country. But, of course, the depreciation in the value of corn, from a variety of other causes, is so great that it takes away a great deal of profit by the time it arrives in this country.

5625. What effect would the introducing of bi-metallism have at the present ratio?—Well, it would not be much use because the thing would be going on as now.

5626. And if the farmer was to benefit, you would want 15½ or something between that and the present ratio?—I think so. I do not think that the benefit of bi-metallism would come to the farmer unless the old ratio, or something approaching it, could be restored. He complains now, and therefore if it were stereotyped as it is now the complaint would go on.

5627. The effect of that would be to let him have nominally a better price for his produce than now?—Nominally.

5628. That is the real meaning of the change?—Yes.

5629. Would it not be that after a little time rents would get adjusted to this new condition of things, and the farmer in carrying on his business would be exactly where he was before?—Very likely. I say plainly I do not attach very much importance to it; I am only putting before you the view which is generally taken by the agriculturists as to the effect of this bi-metallism. I think it does, certainly at the present time, induce imports of corn from India.

Protection.

5630. If protection helped to raise prices it would alter the general level of prices, would it not, because if you alter the general level of prices permanently, after a time by the law of fluctuations, rent would be much more than it is now, and it would be no permanent benefit to the farming interest?—I do not think that rents would be raised in proportion to the increased value of the commodities raised by the farmers. I have no doubt they would be raised somewhat, and the landlord will get the benefit of that; but I do not think that they would be raised so as to take up the whole of the profit which would be obtainable from the increased prices. Of course, I would be most cautious that I, myself, as a politician do not advocate protection, because of course it is a selfish matter to the farmer and the landlord.

5631. I do not wish to bring in the general argument about protection, because it is rather against the feeling of the Commission that it should be introduced, but I should like to have it mentioned that in the days when the discussion between Protection and Free Trade was going on, the contention on the free trade side was that the farming interest did not benefit by protection?—Those days were long before I knew anything about the matter.

5632. That is what I wish to have on record, that you think it is a desirable thing in the farming interest that we should have protection, as it is the farming interest that we are now on?—Certainly.

Tenants' capital.

5633. (*Mr. Clay.*) You seem to say that the tenants have failed to a considerable extent for want of capital?—They have had a large reduction of their capital and that puts them at a great disadvantage.

5634. Would not that capital be decreased over and above the bad prices they get by the extreme rents they pay?—To a small proportion perhaps.

5635. In a small proportion only?—The depression or decrease in agricultural value has been far more than the mere difference between the rents that they have now and what they used to pay. But they have had a loss themselves.

Reduction of rent.

5636. If you had given the reduction to the tenants according to the prices by which they might pay their expenses, would not they be in a better position now?—That would, in most cases, entirely sweep away the whole rent of the land.

5637. And would not it be a wiser policy to have given the tenants larger decreases or abatements, and kept them, in a sense, going?—To give away the owner's income of course is hardly reasonable—it is not easy to say. Would it be a wise policy to do it?

Land in hand.

5638. I am not pointing to the whole income; that is rather an extreme view of the case. With regard to the farms you have taken in hand—how many are there just now?—Only one besides my own now.

5639. Have you your balance sheet on that farm?—Yes.

5640. What has it been realising?—The farms that I have had on hand are not fair examples of my own farming. I would wish to say that they are farms which I have had to take because they were in bad condition, and, therefore, my balance sheet upon them would be a different thing if I had kept them on. But I may say, that I have never made any profit whatever out of a farm taken in hand, because I have had to put large expenditure upon it for the sake of bringing it into a condition again so as to command a tenant of any position at all.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

5641. I believe you are correct in that point; in improving the farm you cannot expect a profit. With regard to the other part of your examination as to the Agricultural Holdings Act, they did not take on with it?—Not in court. I think it has had a large influence upon the general transactions of farming, but certainly they have not had many cases in court.

Payment of compensation.

5642. Has it been usual for the landlords to give compensation under their schedules?—Yes.

5643. May I ask you what is your schedule for compensation?—Those agreements that I have, and I have several now, are based upon the Agricultural Holdings Act. I give the same as in the Agricultural Holdings Act. Formerly I used to have a clause which made their claim for compensation a special claim in writing, and I considered every claim that was made, and we came to a conclusion over a special matter.

5644. Will you hand in the schedule of what you pay as compensation to outgoing tenants?—I cannot at this moment.

5645. Will you send it to us?—It is the same as in the Agricultural Holdings Act. I compensate on the same basis as that, but I may say that I very rarely ask for compensation.

5646. Perhaps your tenants are so poor that they are not able to apply cakes and manures to the land?—Yes, they do.

5647. Do not they ask for compensation for what they have laid out then?—They ask for compensation, no doubt, for the cake that they expend during the last year.

5648. What amount did you give for cake last year?—I gave half the value of the expenditure upon it.

5649. And what did you give the year before?—Well, usually there is no demand made. I do not think I can remember if any demand were made for cake the year before last.

5650. Do you think there is any unexhausted value for the second or third year before the lease goes out?—As a rule, the Herefordshire tenants put all their manure which they have made upon the land into their off-growing crop of wheat, and as they get a direct benefit there is not very much value which they do not get the benefit of.

5651. But you take all the cake and manure. Do you take it out in the first crop?—I do not say all.

5652. There is some left?—They remember this off-growing crop the year after they leave, and they put all the manure on to that.

5653. Do you take all the manurial value of the cakes used?—I do not consider that they take it all off, but I think they will take off half of it.

5654. You give half for that year?—Yes.

5655. But nothing is allowed for the year before?—I do not think that I can remember any. This is a point upon which I will not be quite positive, but I do not think that I have been asked for the value the year before the last.

5656. (*Mr. Little.*) Upon a question that Mr. Clay has asked you, is not compensation on the scale of one half of the last year's consumption rather a rough measure of the value from an average expenditure of previous years of cake?—Yes, it is.

5657. It is not given on the assumption that one-half of the last year's cake is positively remaining, is it?—Well, it is given on the assumption that the tenant has not got about half the value that he himself has been at the cost of.

5658. In some districts the custom is to give one-third of the last year and one-sixth of the previous year's consumption?—Yes.

5659. And in some cases the compensation is based upon the consumption of three years by a diminishing scale?—Yes.

5660. Those are all rough and ready matters to give a man some compensation for that which he has not been able to recover from the land?—Certainly.

5661. That is the substance of the old Lincolnshire custom, on which the Agricultural Holdings Act was based?—Yes.

5662. May I ask, as a matter of practice, whether the way-going crop is taken by the landlord or the incoming tenant, or harvested by the outgoing tenant?—In some cases, according to the custom of the country, the outgoing tenant has to harvest it himself. He has the right of the buildings, and has access to thresh it, and store it. But in my own case I always agree to take it in the month of August at a valuation.

Valuation.

5663. With regard to awards under the Agricultural Holdings Act, they only go to the county court judge in case of appeal?—Quite so.

5664. Or if one of the parties applies to the judge to appoint a referee?—I merely gave those figures to show how little litigious matter there was in respect of this.

5665. I understand that the Act is in operation, but the county court judge has not had to interpose?—That is my view.

5666. And, therefore, it has acted smoothly?—Yes.

Rural depopulation.

5667. As to the question of the depopulation of your county, the population has been steadily declining, and in the rural districts that decline has been considerable?—Yes.

5668. To what do you attribute that?—Well, of course, generally to the depression, but, as I said before, largely to the fact that the mining industry in South Wales has been so prosperous of recent years that a large number of labourers have gone away there to get positions of various sorts.

5669. You have given information, which I have before me, to the Labour Commission on the whole subject of the condition of the labourer?—Yes.

Effect of increased prices on rent.

5670. (*Mr. Long.*) I have one or two questions to put with respect to the examination by Mr. Giffen just now. I understood Mr. Giffen to indicate that if either of your suggested remedies, protection or bi-metallism, were to be adopted, and supposing the result were to be an increase in the price of agricultural commodities, the benefit of such increase would, by the natural rising of rents, pass entirely into the hands of the landlords?—I did not say entirely. I thought I had guarded myself that I did not mean entirely. I think some of it would, and, perhaps, a considerable portion of it; but I do not think the entire profit would go to the landlord. I think a great deal of it would be arrested by the tenant farmer.

5671. Is it your experience that farmers in the large majority of cases, whose occupancy has been extended back to the time when prices were much higher, contend that they would, while paying the higher rents, be much better off if they had the higher prices?—They do contend that.

5672. Is it not rather remarkable that the majority of the farmers hold this view, which is directly opposite to those who champion their cause, but who believe that the landlord would be benefited, and not the farmer?—It is remarkable.

5673. When it is suggested that any increase of prices would lead to any raising of rents, is not it the case that the fall of rents has been so great, and the difficulty to get tenants so extreme, that it would take a very long period of increased prices before there would be any attempt made to raise rents?—I think so.

5674. Would not it be rather a question of keeping the tenants and getting rents at all, and not of raising rents?—It would largely be so.

Reduction of rents.

5675. Mr. Clay suggested that it would be better to keep tenants by giving a further portion of the rent to them, and your comment was that it would mean giving up income altogether. In the case where agricultural depression is really felt, where the land has gone out of occupation, would not this practically mean giving up the entire income of the landlord?—I should say so, in many cases, to make it profitable to the farmer.

Expenditure on improvements.

5676. If this income, or rent, call it which you like, be surrendered, how would you propose to carry out agricultural improvements, cottage buildings, buildings for the keeping of cattle, land drainage, road making, and any other necessary landlord's repairs, if the rent is to be given up?—It is only to be carried on, if at all, by State funds, or State funds covering the sums supplied by localities. Certainly, if the whole of the rent was taken away, the landlords would not have any money to do that.

5677. In other words, the State would have to step in and become the landlord?—Yes, if you swept away the whole income of the landlord, I should think so.

5678. You will probably agree that the suggestion that landlords should be abolished is impossible, that there must remain a landlord, whether it is the State or the individual?—I should say so.

5679. And somebody must carry on the permanent improvements now carried out by the landlord?—Yes.

State aid for workhouses.

5680. With regard to your suggestion about the poor law, I understood you to say that you recommended that the State should contribute, not to indoor relief, but to outdoor relief?—No, I said I would like the State to contribute towards the establishment charges of the workhouse, rather than by paying subventions for indoor paupers, and that a subvention of so much per head for indoor paupers would have the direct effect of stimulating the guardians to send people into the workhouse. That is a stimulus I should desire to avoid.

5681. Are you quite sure that your suggestion with regard to establishment charges would avoid that?—I think so, to a large extent. I do not myself doubt it would tend to that result.

5682. Have you calculated the proportion of establishment charges as charged to the poor rate, as compared with the maintenance of a pauper, either inside or outside?—I cannot give you exact figures at this moment, but the charges of establishment in many of the country workhouses vary between 200*l.* and 400*l.*

5683. The establishment charges?—Yes, for matron, and master, and doctors, and rations for the officers, and repairs.

5684. Is it not a fact that under some recent arrangements of local taxation, those charges are already met by State subventions?—I said that.

5685. What is your proposal?—Merely to increase that.

5686. If it is met already by State subventions, you cannot increase it. You cannot pay again what is already paid. The establishment charges are practically paid by State subventions?—I am not aware that they are paid altogether. I do not think that the salaries of the master and matron are paid.

5687. Is there any balance remaining which is not met by the grants in aid?—Of course, my suggestion would mean increasing the grants in aid.

5688. Your idea would be that there should be a relief to the fixed charges, and not any impetus given to putting paupers in the workhouse?—Yes.

5689. You hold the belief that paupers can be better maintained out of the workhouse than in it?—Well, it depends, of course, on the particular case, but my view is against unduly or artificially increasing the number of indoor paupers, when there is not a necessity for it in the case itself.

State pensions.

5690. Then would you be prepared, holding that view, to continue the present system of out-door relief?—Yes, with modifications. I could not suggest anything better, except that I should like to see, as you are probably aware, a system of national pensions established to which the State should contribute.

5691. You do not propose to confine the State funds to those who are necessitous and indigent?—No, certainly not. Everyone would have to fulfil certain conditions. If they fulfil those conditions and obtained the State grant, then my view is that it would lessen out-paupers in any case.

5692. Would your State pension be confined to those now called paupers?—Oh, dear me, no. It would take the case of very few of them really, because those who fulfil the conditions which I certainly would place upon it, of having done something for themselves in the way of acquiring the pension, would probably be those who would not come upon the poor rate.

5693. In considering the State pensions, it is necessary to have in view the poor law administration. Do you believe that the establishment of State pensions would do away with the necessity of poor law relief?—I think so, to a considerable extent in course of time.

5694. It might diminish it?—It might diminish it.

5695. But it would not do away with it?—No.

5696. Whatever system you adopt, you must continue to administrate the poor law to those who are absolutely in want?—I have no doubt for years to come the poor law would have to exist.

State aid for workhouses.

5697. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You were not thinking of any establishment charges other than those of salaries of officers?—Yes, I was—the salaries and the rations of workhouse officers, and the cost of repairs, and things of that sort.

5698. There was a Union Officers' Grant given by the Local Government Act, which covered the whole cost of salaries and rations of officers as fixed on a certain day before the passing of the Act. It was fixed on past expenditure, so that no encouragement was given to increase the expenses. But the whole amount of salaries and rations up to that date is met now by a Government grant?—I had forgotten that it had been altogether provided for. I knew large subsidies had been given, but I did not think that it had been altogether covered; at all events, such charges as repairs to buildings are not met.

Increased grants for schools.

5699. You think there should be some further subventions in aid of schools?—That is a suggestion.

5700. You have no specific proposal as to the form in which you should get the additional grant for school board purposes?—Well, it would have to be an increase of the Imperial grant, as I have said before, if it is to do any good to the land.

5701. Given on the same principle as at present?—On the same principle as at present.

Rates.

5702. Have the rural rates risen or fallen of late years in Herefordshire?—Fallen. The Local Government Bill of 1888, and the subsequent relief which came to us under that Bill, has made a difference of between 4*d.* and 5*d.* in the £ upon our rates.

5703. And you do not think that they have conduced to extravagance on the part of the local authorities?—I think I should answer that in the negative, but of course county councils have not been going long enough to make me certain how to answer it.

Railway rates.

5704. Have you heard of any grievances in the disposal of fruit in Herefordshire, from the high market tolls in any towns?—No, I have not heard in Herefordshire of any of those grievances. Of course the general grievances which I have heard very often is as to the high rates charged by railway companies upon local agricultural produce, that is a very constant source of grievance.

Reduction of rent.

5705. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Reverting to one or two questions asked by Mr. Long, how much have rents been reduced in your district? I think you said 25 per cent.?—I should think between 25 and 30 per cent.

5706. Your own is about 20 per cent.?—Yes, but that is a calculation which I have made upon the whole property, which includes buildings and cottages of various sorts and kinds, which is not applicable to agricultural land alone. The farm land is more than that. I have one or two farms which are reduced 60 per cent.

5707. Do you know of any case where the whole income has been swept away?—No, I cannot say that I do in Herefordshire.

5708. The farmers were anxious to revert to the conditions about 1872, I think you said in reply to Mr. Long?—I do not quite follow you.

5709. The farmers wished to revert to the conditions which were ruling from 1870 to 1880?—Well, the farmers were doing pretty well in the years 1872 and 1873 up till 1878.

Protection.

5710. But were those days of higher prices the times that farmers wished to revert to?—Yes; the answer to Mr. Long's suggestion was this: That the farmers preferred higher rents and the higher prices, more than the low rents and the low prices.

5711. Were not these conditions under free trade?—Certainly.

5712. You have not heard any farmers who would wish to revert to the time before the Corn Laws were removed?—I know many farmers would wish to do it; whether it would be wise or not I will not say, but many farmers would like to do it.

5713. Would they be wise in your own opinion?—Personally I think that they would for themselves. I am not saying now for the nation.

5714. Was not agricultural depression as severe and as acute, even more so, prior to the abolition of the Corn Laws than it is now?—Amongst the labourers it was very much more so. But I do not think it was amongst the farmers. With regard to the labourers, it must be recognised that the price of commodities does not rule the price of labour, as it is very often supposed to do.

5715. Although protection would benefit the farmers, you would not advocate it as a national remedy?—No, I would not, not as a politician, certainly.

Low prices.

5716. Do you think the low prices that have been running of late have been brought about by those industrial disputes between the colliers and the masters?—As far as such disputes affect trade it has. Bad trade, of course, is bad for farmers as well as everybody else.

Land in hand.

5717. I think you said you had farms in hand. Could you give us the average rent of the one you have in hand?—The average rent of the farm that I have in hand at the present time is about 26*s.* an acre.

5718. Have you offered to let it?—I have let it now.

5719. So that you have really none in hand now?—After next Candlemas I shall have none in hand.

Condition of farms at end of lease.

5720. You said that your farms were usually given up in an impoverished condition. To what do you attribute that?—To the farmer holding on as long as he can, and keeping it as long as he possibly can have a chance of making a living.

5721. Possibly paying rent out of capital?—Nearly always, for the last year or two.

5722. Then if a reduction of rent had been given sooner, it would have benefited the landlord in this respect, that he would not have had his farm thrown upon his hands in an impoverished condition?—If the reduction was sufficient to make that particular man able to go on, but a great deal depends upon the man himself. One man can farm to a profit and another man cannot, because he is a poor farmer. The man that is wanting in energy generally goes to the wall.

5723. But, as a general rule, have farmers lost their capital?—I think a great many of them have lost a great deal of it.

Competition for farms.

5724. Prior to 1877 was there a good competition for farms?—Yes, very fair. It was in the decade of 1850 and 1860, however, that a considerable rise of rents took place, but that was before the heavy competition from abroad.

5725. There was a considerable rise in the rents at that time?—There was.

5726. How many applicants would you get for a decently fertile farm in 1877?—That very much depends, but I should say three, or four, or five for every farm.

Protection and competition farms.

5727. Presuming that we were to revert to this year's prices by means of protection, would not there be the same competition amongst farmers?—Yes, probably there would.

5728. And then, would it not in the natural tendency of things, be the case that most of the additional price would go in rent?—I have already said that some of it would unquestionably, but I do not think all.

5729. But presuming there was a strong competition for farms, then the natural tendency, of course, would be that most of the additional profits would go into the landlord's pocket?—No, I do not say most. Some of it would, but not most.

5730. You said a considerable proportion just now?—Judging from what did happen when rents were higher, I think that the larger proportion would go into the farmer's hands, if you take the fall of 10*s.* per quarter, upon land that would give on a very moderate average crop, something like 2*l.* or 3*l.* per acre. That raising of rent per acre would be an enormous rise. Whereas, supposing 1*l.* was raised upon the rent, it would still leave 1*l.* or 2*l.* more profit to the farmer.

5731. But would it not be the tendency, presuming there was a competition for the farms, that the farmers would give as much as they could afford to give?—Yes, but I am still of opinion that they would not give anything like as much or it would take away all their profits.

Tenure.

5732. How are farms let in your district?—Chiefly by yearly tenancy from Candlemas, with a year's notice.

5733. Would they be let by tender?—Mostly they are now let upon the conditions of the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883.

The fixing of rent.

5734. And how would the rent be fixed?—Do you mean whether by arbitration or otherwise?

5735. I mean to say, how is it fixed now?—It is fixed now by arrangement between landlord and tenant. The landlord has to find out how much he can get, and fix it in that way.

Difficulty in letting.

5736. Is there any difficulty in letting the good farms in Hereford?—No. They still command a market.

Tenants' capital.

5737. To what do you attribute the estimated loss of the tenant's capital to 5*l.* an acre?—I estimate it in this way. Of course it is a rough-and-ready way, but I make the statement from the inquiries that I make when new tenants are taking farms, and from the statements they make to me. Very few farmers now offer to take a farm who have more than 5*l.* an acre of capital.

5738. They probably have lost a great deal of their capital during the past 10 years?—I have no doubt of it whatever.

5739. And they have paid a considerable deal of rent in the meantime?—They have paid some rent of course.

5740. And they have paid a good deal of rent out of the capital?—I am afraid they have.

5741. Do you think it is just to the tenant to pay rent out of his capital?—Well, if a man engages to do a certain thing, and to pay a certain amount of money, I do not think that it is unjust to ask him to do it. Of course, the landlord need not know whether it is out of capital or not, except from general inquiries.

5742. But tenants have paid a large amount of their rent out of their capital?—I think, no doubt, they have.

The law of distraint.

5743. As to the abolition of the law of distress, do you think it would be prejudicial to the tenant?—I think it would.

5744. Would not the policy of the law of distress act in this way: that the landlord is apt to take a tenant at a higher rent, because he is sure of having his money? I do not think it is so. I hardly think it has any effect of that sort.

Restrictions in agreement.

5745. You say the agreements are not altered, but the restrictions are relaxed?—Well, a great many farms have not any agreement, except as to the rent, and it has to be held under the conditions of the Agricultural Holdings Act.

5746. But you said there were some agreements in force?—Yes.

5747. But their conditions have been relaxed?—Yes.

5748. But those conditions could be put in force at the landlord's option?—Yes, unless there is some written agreement to the contrary.

The Ground Game Act.

5749. Would you advocate farmers having the right to kill ground game upon their farms as they please?—They have it now.

5750. Would you advocate their having it by law?—You are asking me if I disapprove of the Act of 1880. I think there is something to be said for it, but a good deal against it. I think it has created difficulties that did not exist before. At the same time, I fully sympathise with a man who has his crops destroyed by ground game, but he has a remedy now in his own hands, and as far as my observation goes, there is very little ground game in the county.

5751. Is it your opinion that a farmer should have a right to kill ground game upon his estate as he pleases?—I prefer the system of mutual agreement as to the matter of control. I mention that I go in for compensation always for destruction by ground game, but I think that the farmer ought either to have the power of doing it, or compensation for the loss he sustains.

5752. And you would not support an extension of the Act to give him the right to kill ground game as he pleases?—I do not think he requires an extension. He has the right now.

5753. The present Act says he has only the right to kill ground game with, I think, one man, and to put traps in one position. Would you give him an extension of the power by sweeping away all those restrictions?—I do not know that it would make very much difference to the actual clearing away of ground game. They now employ men to catch rabbits for them, who get them chiefly by wires and by traps, no doubt placed in a particular position, and they shoot them.

5754. They are only enabled to have one gun, under the Act?—That is quite enough for them.

5755. Would you extend the liberty?—I do not think, if you ask me personally, that I should; I think their powers of destruction are ample at the present moment.

Fruit-growing.

5756. (*Mr. Channing.*) I want to know whether in your experience that any type of farming would especially help the farmers, which you might recommend an extension of?—No. The cattle breeders have, as a rule, done well; also sheep farmers have done fairly well; and dairy farmers have done very well; and all those branches help. Fruit might certainly be a direction in which development might take place.

5757. You are aware of the immense imports of dried apples from America and elsewhere?—Yes.

5758. Is there any effort to compete with the Americans in our own markets by combined action?—Not in Herefordshire. There has not been combined action. I think the suggestion which was spoken of this morning, about having some central place where apples might be sent, and cider might be made, was a very useful one, and one which I have often thought of.

5759. And those other industries, taking the drying of apples, might also be introduced?—Yes.

5760. As to whether there is any special tenure of these fruit farms, are the trees put in by the tenant himself?—No; nearly always by the landlord.

5761. So that the question of compensation does not arise?—Hardly ever. If it is done by the tenant there is nearly always a clause to compensate him for anything that he has done in that way.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

5762. You spoke of the scale of compensation under the Agricultural Holdings Act. You were referring to the Act of 1875, which does provide a scale—the Act of 1883 does not?—The principle of the Act of 1883.

Payment of compensation.

5763. The principle of the Act of 1883 is rather to secure to the outgoing tenant the remaining value of what he has done to the holding, whatever it may be, irrespective of the number of years?—Quite so; but that is the principle that I was referring to.

5764. And that is the practice of valuers under the Act?—Yes.

Expenditure on improvements.

5765. Do you know of any case in which the tenants have wished to change the character of their farm; for instance, to turn it into a fruit farm, or exact improvements of a permanent nature, in which the landlords were unwilling or unable to pay for the improvements?—No, I do not think I do. Of course, landlords cannot always meet the whole wishes of the tenants, but I believe they do so to a very large extent.

5766. And buildings for extending dairy operations?—Yes.

5767. You do not know of cases in which legitimate grounds have been shown that the landlord has not met their views of improving the farm?—No, I cannot say that I know of any.

Reductions of rent.

5768. I do not know whether you said when the permanent reductions were made in Herefordshire, about what year it was?—They began chiefly about the year 1880. 1879 was a very bad year. The weather was exceedingly bad in 1879; the crops were poor, and the weather and the harvest was very bad; and competition began to be felt in that year more than previously; and the reductions undoubtedly began to be very marked in 1880.

5769. But they would be in the form of remissions?—Yes, and largely at that time; 10, 15, and 20 per cent. remissions.

5770. The permanent reductions were made five or six years ago?—The reductions were made whenever the farm changed hands afterwards.

5771. About the average reduction of rent, could you state what would be the usual percentage of repairs in Herefordshire on the owners of farms, the landlords' repairs, I mean?—I should say that they would vary very much indeed, but I think 20 or 25 per cent. would be about the figure of most estates.

5772. So that the reduction of rents and the percentage of the landlord's repairs, would after all be not the whole income, but half, according to that?—Not the whole income; I said I did not know a single case where the whole income had been swept away.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

Payment of compensation.

5773. You are aware that Sir James Caird suggested, with reference to the Act of 1883, that compensation should be given to the tenant whether he left or remained in his holding; that is, that at the termination of a tenancy, if a tenant wishes to renew the tenancy, and go on, he should have a valuation of what he did to the farm. Do you approve of that principle?—I see nothing to disapprove of in it; I think it is fair and just.

5774. The establishment of that principle is really establishing what is just to the tenant under the circumstances, that on the renewal of a tenancy he should have what he has done to the farm considered?—Of course he reaps the advantage, and therefore he would be much in the position of being able to benefit as well as the old tenant—he would reap the advantage of it.

5775. If it was not allowed him in the new rent to that extent, he would lose the remaining value of the tenancy?—But he, as an incoming tenant, would gain the advantage.

Land in hand.

5776. On your own farm, which you said you could make no profit from, the one in your own hands, were you allowing yourself a rent of 26*s*. per acre?—I was charging myself the same rent as before.

5777. That is 26*s*.?—On that particular farm; yes.

Fruit-growing.

5778. (*Mr. Everett.*) With regard to the apples that you spoke of selling, who paid for the gathering of them; the buyer or the seller?—The price I mentioned was for the apples in heaps upon the ground, which really would mean that the seller paid for the apples being knocked from the tree and placed in heaps, but no other expense.

5779. They were not gathered by ladders, and put into sacks to avoid bruising?—No.

Bi-metallism.

5780. As to the question of bi-metallism, that system prevailed, did it not, until 1873?—Well, in some countries.

5781. And, practically, while it prevailed, gold and silver, the world over, were one money?—I believe there was very little difference in the ratio of exchange.

5782. And at that time in many important nations, mints were opened as freely to silver as to gold?—Yes.

5783. And consequently the closing of mints against silver in these nations cut off part of the old supply of money?—That is so.

5784. And this artificial cutting off of the old supply, I understand you to say, has raised the value of money, so that we get less of it in exchange for produce?—It has raised the value of gold.

5785. I mean our money, which is gold?—I would guard myself by saying this: I would not attribute it all to one cause, but there is no question that gold is higher in value in relation to silver money than it used to be.

5786. And the cutting off of part of the old supply of money was naturally calculated to raise the value of that which remained?—Yes.

Effect of higher prices on the agricultural industry.

5787. Would you say now, as regards agriculture, is not price really the key to agricultural depression, or to agricultural prosperity; a higher price means agricultural prosperity, a lower price means agricultural depression, speaking broadly?—Speaking broadly only. Of course, we must recognise the fact that the gold valuations of things are less, and therefore gold in itself is more valuable. Therefore the less price in gold is more valuable now, with regard to other commodities, than it was before the time you mentioned.

5788. Still, would you not say that agriculture is likely to be in prosperity when prices are rising, and in depression when prices are falling, if it continues over some period of years?—I cannot give a general assent to that proposition. It must be qualified with so many other circumstances.

5789. Is it not the prosperity of the farmer that makes higher rent possible, must not the farmer prosper before he will be willing to pay a higher rent?—Certainly.

5790. And in the present condition of things should you say that labour is able to get its fair share of any increased prosperity in our industry?—Yes, I should say so, as far as agriculture is concerned. The agricultural labourer has suffered very little in my opinion.

5791. And if our industry grows instead of falls, he would be able to get higher wages corresponding?—Not by any means. The price of labour does not depend upon the high price of commodities, but upon the amount of labour in the market. At the present time, and for some time past, there has been no glut of labour in the agricultural market. In Herefordshire there has been a difficulty in getting labour, owing to the cause that I have mentioned, and therefore the price has been kept up.

5792. And if the industry became more prosperous would not that make more demand for labour, and would not labour be able to get a larger remuneration?—Yes; if there is no more labour imported into it.

5793. Would it not be your opinion that in times of a rise in rents that it would probably be better for all classes connected with the land, better for the farmer, because he would not be able to pay them if he was not better off, and better for the landowner, and better also for the labourer?—Yes; that means to say that agricultural prosperity is a good thing, which I fully agree with, from whatever cause it may arise.

5794. And to all the classes connected with the land?—Yes.

5795. Are you acquainted with the history of agriculture in the early period of the century?—Well, I cannot say that I am specially acquainted with it.

Cider-making.

5796. (*Mr. Elton.*) With regard to cider, a great deal of cider is drunk by the labourers on the farms as an addition to their wages, I suppose?—It is generally made by the job.

5797. Do not the farmers give the labourers a quantity of cider to drink in addition to the wages?—Yes, to drink; that used to be the custom invariably until after the passing of the Truck Act.

5798. But you know that has been explained now, not to refer to those cases where the farmers give cider?—Anyway, they do in fact give it, but I have always disapproved of it and sold it to them at a low rate.

5799. But you know there has been a decision allowing them to give it?—Then that is very lately.

5800. Yes?—I did not know that.

5801. That disposes of a lot of the cider made?—Yes.

5802. And then a great deal of it goes to London, or some great centre?—I do not think much Herefordshire cider does go to London.

5803. I am asking for information. I come from a cider country, and I know that there is a demand for rough cider to be used in the manufacture of something, or for drinking in the towns?—Yes.

5804. Do you think that there is not such a demand from Herefordshire, so that you require to make an improvement in the manufacture of cider to stimulate competition?—My opinion is that the bulk of the cider made in Herefordshire is such that there is not much demand for it out of the county.

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5805. You see my point, that if there is a stronger demand for the rough cider, there is no use making the fine?—But I find a considerable demand for the good cider, and, possibly, if they made more of it they might sell it.

Increased state grants for schools.

5806. About the school board; you did not confine your observations to school board districts, but your answers would be applicable to other places?—To voluntary schools as well.

5807. You would not favour school board districts more than other districts?—No.

Fruit-growing.

5808. (*Lord Vernon.*) Have you heard any complaints from those men who have improved their estates by planting fruit trees, on account of their rates being raised unduly on their improvements?—Not recently. I have heard cases some few years ago when such complaints were made, but I have not heard of any recent cases.

Creameries.

5809. And you said that you would like to see creameries established. Have you any particular reason why you fancy that they would be more advantageous than dairying in farmhouses?—Not in large farmhouses. But there are a great many small holdings where the quantity of milk which is derived from one, or two, or three cows, is hardly enough to make it profitable.

5810. Really you think that creameries would stimulate the creation of small holdings?—I think they would.

Effect of higher prices on the agricultural industry.

5811. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) One question only. With regard to the effect of the increase in prices on the prosperity of the farmer you were asked just now whether, in the event of an increase taking place in prices, rents would not be increased in proportion, and that the position of the farmer would be exactly what it was before the depression began. When did agricultural depression begin?—Well, is it the recent agricultural depression you are alluding to?

5812. Yes?—I should date it from the year 1879.

5813. Is it not the fact that the year 1874 was one of great prosperity for agriculture?—Yes.

5814. It was about that time that it had reached the summit of prosperity?—I should have put it rather earlier than that, but up to the year before that farmers were doing very well.

5815. You heard it mentioned that 1874 was the last really good year that the farmers had?—It was about that time.

5816. If the effect of bi-metallism was such as you have said in your opinion that it might be, it would be to make the farmer very prosperous again?—If you resorted back to the old ratio it might have the effect, no doubt, of raising prices.

5817. If it put the farmer back, as was stated, in exactly the same position that he was before the depression began; that position was one of great prosperity as compared with now?—Yes, it was; but I did not say that that was due to bi-metallism.

5818. No, no; but I am assuming it. I understand you to say that you thought one effect of that would be to raise prices?—Somewhat I think it would.

5819. Then if the effect of a rise in prices was to replace him in the position in which he was before the prices began to fall, that would be a condition of prosperity?—Yes.

5820. I think on that point the majority of agriculturists have no doubt?—But I do not go so far as some bi-metallists as to say that is the only cause, or the main cause. The difficulty I see in the matter is, that they would not be able to restore the old ratio.

Protection.

5821. You do not advocate protection as a politician, but, as a remedy for agricultural depression, I understand that you think it would be very beneficial?—Of course, because it would raise the prices.

Cattle-breeding.

5822. I understood that you looked to the development of the production of cattle as one partial remedy for depression?—Well, the farmers who have been rearing and selling cattle have been better off than those who had to rely upon corn; but unfortunately a great portion of the land in Herefordshire and elsewhere is such as will not grow grass without being broken up, and going through a course of tillage.

Slaughter of cattle at port of debarkation.

5823. For that purpose do you agree with what has been stated by various witnesses who have given evidence before us, that it is very important that all foreign cattle should be slaughtered at the port of debarkation?—With regard to the prevention of disease, certainly.

5824. You attach importance to it?—I do, for the prevention of disease.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. Maurice Holzmann called and examined.

Mr. M. Holzmann.

5825. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You are Secretary, I think, to the Council of the Duchy of Cornwall?—I am.

5826. Since what date have you filled that position?—Since 1886.

Particulars of estates.

5827. I understand that you are prepared to bring up to date the various facts connected with the Duchy estates as they were laid before the Richmond Commission in 1880?—I have some figures here which correspond almost exactly to the two statements given in the Appendix to the evidence of the Richmond Commission. The first statement is one with regard to the outlay of capital both on buildings and on drainage. The second is a statement of the rack rents receivable during the year 1892 from farms of 40 acres and upwards held on leases and annual tenancies. (*The statements were handed in.*) (*See* Appendices A. XIX. and XX.)

Locality of estates.

5828. The Duchy estates, I think, are in seven different counties of England?—In seven different counties of England.

5829. Will you state what those counties are?—They are Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Wilts, Somersetshire, Berks, and Lincoln.

5830. Would it be accurate to describe the estates as being, on the whole, purely agricultural?—In those seven counties almost exclusively agricultural. There are a few houses in Dorset and in Wilts, but principally agricultural.

Expenditure on improvements.

5831. Would you kindly state what is the effect of the first statement you have been good enough to hand in?—The first statement contains the outlay of capital in the different counties on buildings, amounting to a total of 91,562*l.* 11*s.* 9*d.*, and on drainage works on 2,171 acres, amounting to 14,423*l.* 12*s.* 4*d.*

5832. Making a total of——?—Making a total of 105,986*l.* laid out from the year 1880 to 1892.

5833. (*Mr. Little.*) On how many acres?—That is a very difficult question. The acreage of the Duchy of Cornwall estates varies with every year, owing to there being a large amount of land still held on lives. In former years the whole of the Duchy of Cornwall estates were let on lives at nominal rents and on payment of fines. That system was discontinued, I may say, at the birth of the Prince of Wales, and was legally prohibited in 1863. There is still a large acreage, amounting to 4,944 acres, held on lives.

Tenure of farms.

5834. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I think I will ask you questions about that a little later on. It will come in more conveniently then. Will you say what the effect of the second statement is?—The second statement gives the division of the holdings of 40 acres and upwards according to leaseholds and annual tenancies. A comparison with the statements handed in in 1880 will show that the leaseholds have very largely diminished, and the annual tenancies very greatly increased. I may say that within the last 10 years there have only been four new leases granted. The whole of the lands that have had to be re-let have been re-let, I may say, as annual tenancies.

5835. With the exception of a certain number of leases that have been let for lives again?—No, none have been let for lives.

Existence of depression.

5836. I will examine you on this part of your evidence directly, when we come to the question of the tenure under which the estates are held. But before that, I should like to ask you whether the estates generally are suffering from depression?—Very much so.

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5837. Since what date?—Well, I can say that the depression has made itself felt in the receipt of rents since the year 1878, which was perhaps the best year; but from 1879 onwards the amount received in rents has decreased.

Acreage and rental.

5838. Can you give us particulars as to what was the acreage of the estates in 1878?—There is a statement which I have prepared which shows the acreage in 1878, with the rents receivable, and the acreage in 1892 with the rents receivable. I say *receivable* because those are the rents according to agreement. But they do not represent the actual rents as far as regards the Duchy, because there are remissions of rents. (*The statement was handed in.*) (*See* Appendix A. XXI.)

5839. I see the acreage in 1878 was 29,970 acres?—The acreage in hand.

5840. And the net rent in 1878 was 39,295*l.*?—That was after deducting allowances to tenants which were made for the year, also repairs paid for by the Duchy. Although all the holdings are let with an undertaking by the tenants that they will do the repairs, in many cases when the tenants are found not to be in a position to do the repairs, they are done by the Duchy in order to prevent the buildings falling into disrepair.

Expenditure on improvements.

5841. Then I find from your return that in 1892 the acreage of the estates was 38,160 acres, and the net rent was 29,352*l.*?—That is so, because there are the same allowances made as regards remissions of rent, payments for repairs, and the loss of interest on outlay from capital on permanent improvements. Up to 1878 the tenants used to pay interest on outlay for permanent improvements. Since 1880 there is probably not a single instance in which a tenant has paid interest on the outlay on permanent improvements. In the case of the Duchy of Cornwall, this falls very heavily on the owner in the first years. It amounts, in the first place, to the loss of interest on the capital invested, and in the second place to the repayment from revenue of instalments of one-thirtieth. If these instalments are re-invested, in that case, of course, the interest gradually increases again, and therefore I would not take 6½ per cent., as it is the loss on the first year, and only 3 per cent. in the last year; but, by dividing it over the 30 years in which the whole repayment has to take place, it really is repaid at 5 per cent. The annual loss is 5 per cent., and therefore I have taken, in this statement, which I may hand in here, the interest on outlay at 5 per cent. That is only the interest on outlay that has been made in the years from 1878 to 1892, not on what had been laid out before, although the repayments go on, so that probably the result might be even worse. In that comparative statement I have not included arrears, although very frequently arrears, when they accumulate, are discharged; but I have left them out of account. I give you figures, from which it may be seen that in 1878 the arrears accrued during that year amounted to 1,398*l.* In the year 1892 the arrears accrued during the year amounted to 2,733*l.* This does not mean that there was only 2,733*l.* owing, because there were other arrears from previous years, but I have only taken those which were actual additions.

Arrears of rent.

Acreage and rental.

5842. Your figures, then, as I understand them, appear to show that while there has been an increase of the acreage of the estates of something like 9,000 acres, the rental, on the other hand, has fallen by about 10,000*l.*?—That is so.

Tithe.

5843. (*Lord Cobham.*) Have you included tithe rent-charge?—In this second statement, in the margin, it will appear that the rents are exclusive of the tithe rent-charge. In 1878 the tithe was payable by the tenant. It now is payable by the landowner. But in order to make it clear I have deducted from the rent the actual amount of tithe paid by the Duchy, so that the figures are absolutely comparable in that respect.

Reduction of rents.

5844. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What percentage of reduction of rent does that represent?—That represents upwards of 41 per cent. reduction in rent.

5845. Do I understand that is a permanent reduction?—No, a very small fraction is not permanent. It may be that something like 6 per cent. may be only granted in that year. I wish to give to the Commission the comparative results of two years—a year which we consider a good year, 1878, one of the best, and of a bad year, 1892. I may say that for the year 1893 the result will be even worse, because more remissions have taken place in 1893.

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5846. But up to the year 1892 the general result is this, that as compared with the year 1878 there has been a reduction of over 41 per cent. of rents, of which all but 6 per cent. are permanent reductions?—Yes, during the next 25 or 30 years, because by that time the allowance on account of loss of interest on permanent improvements will come to an end.

farms.

5847. Now, you were about to tell us something about leaseholds, I think, when I interrupted you just now. I should like to ask you, in the first place what is the tenure under which the farms of the Duchy are held? Are they held still upon leases?—As I have shown in this statement, there is a number still held on leases, but comparatively few. The great majority, in fact I may say six-sevenths of the lands, are now held on annual tenancy.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

5848. Are they held under agreement, or under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—They are held under an agreement which is based on the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883. The operation of it was especially made applicable to the Duchy of Cornwall by section 37 of the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883.

5849. Do you find that these agreements generally give satisfaction to the tenants?—They give entire satisfaction, as far as I am aware, because there has never been any dispute. That may be partly owing to not many changes of tenancies (owing to a tenant leaving) having taken place. Where a change has taken place we proceed under the Agricultural Holdings Act. Each side—the outgoing and incoming tenant—appoint their valuers, and they settle the matter between them, with the cognizance of the Duchy land steward. There has been no dispute of any kind, and I should say probably not more than five or six cases have occurred since 1883.

Conditions of agreements.

5850. In the case of farms which you have to let to new tenants, which I suppose has occasionally occurred during your time, do you remember any instances in which any requests have been made for changes or modifications in the agreement on the part of the new tenant, the applying tenant?—Well, we have an agreement, which is a printed form, but, as the circumstances of each farm vary, the form of the agreement is adapted to the circumstances of each farm, and, according to the wishes or to the requirements of the proposing tenant, that is modified. For instance, there might be a new agreement made by the same tenant, whose lease had expired, and who wished then to have an annual tenancy. Of course, in many cases the rent is reduced, but otherwise I could not say that any difficulty has arisen.

5851. And modifications are made in the agreement if the tenant desires?—Yes, if, of course, the Duchy Land Steward, who advises the Council, considers them acceptable. But I can only say there is no instance known to me in which a tenant has not been satisfied or has complained that he could not get what he desired.

5852. Do these agreements contain restrictions upon the sale of produce, such as hay or straw?—They do contain that; but, as regards the sale of hay, if the tenant applies for permission he is sure to get it.

Expenditure on improvements.

5853. Are the permanent improvements made at the expense of the Duchy?—They are entirely made at the expense of the Duchy—all those that are in the first Schedule, part 1 and 2, of the Agricultural Holdings Act.

Holdings let on lives.

5854. You were speaking just now of some holdings that had been held upon periods for lives?—Yes.

5855. What occurs in the case of those leases, when they come to an end?—When these leases come to an end, it is generally found that the buildings are in an extremely bad state. Then comes the time for laying out money on buildings, and frequently also on drainage. In many cases the occupying tenant who had held under a lessee for lives, as under-lessee or as subtenant, then becomes the direct tenant of the Duchy; but, as I have said before, since 1880, always on annual tenancy. The buildings then are entirely carried out at the expense of the Duchy, and under the superintendence of the Duchy officers. Plans and specifications are prepared at the expense of the Duchy, and the contracts are made with the Duchy.

5856. At the determination of a lease of that kind, do you ever find it necessary to divide the farms?—When these lands fall into hand, they are very rarely let as such, because whole farms will not fall into hand, or very often it happens that no buildings are on these lands which fall in, and then they are either divided between the adjoining tenements, or they are added as a whole to another tenement. In some cases the lands are so intermixed—those that are in hand and those held on lives—that to leave them intact would make it absolutely impossible to deal with them, because there are no buildings whatever in some cases. Then comes the question of judging what is the most desirable mode of dealing with them—are they to be attached as a whole to the adjoining farm, if they are in one ring fence, or are they to be divided. That depends entirely upon the actual circumstances, which are judged of by the Land Steward, who furnishes reports.

5857. And you deal with them accordingly?—And then these reports are submitted to the Council and considered and decided by the Council.

Land in hand.

5858. Do I understand that some portion of the estates is in the hands of the Duchy itself, and farmed by them?—None, only the woods and waste lands which are not fit for cultivation; there is no agricultural land in the hands of the Duchy.

5859. It is all let?—All let.

Difficulty in letting.

5860. Do you find difficulty in getting tenants in case of a vacancy?—Occasionally we do. I remember a recent case where an effort had been made to find a tenant, but no satisfactory tenant being obtainable, tenders were advertised for, when 12 tenders were sent in, the highest of which involved a reduction of 20 per cent. on the previous rent receivable, but the previous tenant had had remissions in former years, so that virtually it came to the same rent. But in such new tenancies there are always buildings or drainages required, so that a new tenancy in every case, without exception, I may say, means outlay of capital.

Reduction of rent.

5861. So that you have every possible inducement to avoid a change of tenancy if you can?—We have; and for that reason the most liberal remissions and reductions have been made. I may say, in that statement which I handed in, it is given as 41½ per cent. That is on the average of 33,000 acres. But naturally this land is not all of the same value. This is only an average drawn from the whole. We have remitted and actually reduced to more than 100 per cent. It sounds like an Irish bull, but it is a fact. We have let lands, in order not to let them go out of cultivation, at a rent which is not as large as the amount of tithe payable by the Duchy. In other cases we have reduced the rent by 50, by 40, by 30, by 20, and some by 10 per cent., only according to circumstances; but the greatest care has been taken in order to judge of each case on its own merits.

5862. In one instance, I understand you to say, that rather than let the land go out of cultivation you have let it on terms which involve an annual loss to the Duchy?—An annual loss.

5863. What county is that in?—I certainly remember two instances, one in Berkshire and the other in Somersetshire.

5864. (*Mr. Elton.*) Will you tell the Chairman the name of the parish in Somersetshire, if possible?—I would not, off-hand, say in which parish it was.

Rents in 1880 and 1893 compared.

5865. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You manage estates in seven counties. In which of those counties do you find that the agricultural depression is most severe?—You will see that from this second statement, which gives the lettings per acre, and in Berkshire, where I think in 1880 the rent per acre was 33*s.* and 38*s.*, now it is 4*s.* 5*d.* per acre. (*See* Appendix A. XX.)

5866. In Berkshire?—Yes.

5867. I think that information would be very interesting about each of the counties in turn?—They are given in each county separately.

5868. (*Mr. Channing.*) Is the tithe specified with regard to Berkshire?—It is exclusive of tithe there in both instances. In 1880 it was exclusive of tithe, and this is exclusive of tithe also.

5869. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) The statement you refer to is the one of rents receivable during the year 1892?—Yes.

5870. And I understand, in the county of Berkshire, the rent is 4*s.* 5*d.*?—Yes.

5871. What was it in the year 1880?—For leaseholds 33*s.*, and for annual tenancies 38*s.*

5872. Can you tell me what it was in 1880 with regard to the other counties?—This printed statement is with regard to 1880. It is all given, and this is simply the same return as was handed in then, to bring it up to date.

5873. I think it would be interesting to have this upon the notes, and therefore I will ask you to take that and give me the comparison. I will take them in order. In the county of Cornwall I understand that the rent per acre on leaseholds for terms certain is 18*s.* 5*d.*?—Yes.

5874. What was it in 1880?—It was 22*s.*

5875. For annual tenancies it is now 15*s.* 5*d.*?—And it was 21*s.*

5876. Then, in the county of Devon, leaseholds are 15*s.* 9*d.* now?—Yes. They were 29*s.* in 1878.

5877. Annual tenancies are 20*s.* 4*d.*?—In 1892; and they were in 1880, 33*s.*

5878. In the county of Dorset the rent for leaseholders is 21*s.*?—Yes, and they were in 1880, 31*s.*

5879. Annual tenancies are now 18*s.* 7*d.*?—They were 31*s.* in 1880.

5880. In the county of Wiltshire the annual tenancies are now 14*s.* 6*d.*?—Yes, and they were in 1880, 25*s.*

5881. In Somersetshire the annual tenancies are now 23*s.* 6*d.*?—Yes, and were 37*s.* in 1880.

5882. The county of Berkshire is now 4*s.* 5*d.*?—Yes, and they were in 1880 for leaseholds 33*s.*, and for annual tenancies 38*s.*

5883. In the county of Lincoln the leaseholds are now 23*s.* 4*d.*?—Yes, and were 36*s.* in 1880.

5884. And the annual tenancies are now 21*s.* 1*d.*?—Yes; there were no annual tenancies in 1880.

Extent of depression.

5885. In the county of Berkshire you say the depression is greatest?—Is greatest. That is certainly owing to the unfortunate soil, on which no grass will grow for more than a year. Of course it is not bad for corn growing, but very bad for grass.

5886. And I understand from what you tell us that the reductions in rent in each county may be taken as a general indication of the extent of the depression in those counties?—As far as the Duchy of Cornwall estates are concerned.

Causes of depression.

5887. Are you able to express any opinion as to what is the chief and principal cause of this depression?—The low prices of all agricultural produce, and, to a great extent, bad seasons.

5888. And the remedy, therefore, I suppose, would be good seasons and an increase in prices?—An increase in prices.

Size and number of holdings.

5889. Have you anything else you would like to state to me on behalf of the Duchy before you are cross-examined?—I have here another statement, prepared to show the areas of the Duchy of Cornwall estates; how they are divided, in different acreages and the number of holdings. I have given here columns of over 500 acres, between 200 and 500, between 100 and 200, between 40 and 100, between 20 and 40, from 1 to 20, and below 1 acre. They are divided here according to the different counties, and all the estates are given, those in hand as well as those still held on lives. I may say there are altogether 1,570 separate tenancies, 786 below 1 acre, 458 between 1 and 20 acres, 99 between 20 and 40 acres, 114 between 40 and 100 acres, 57 between 100 and 200 acres, 45 between 200 and 500, and 11 above 500 acres. (*See* Appendix A. XXII.)

Comparison between large and small holdings.

5900. Could you supplement that by telling the Commission what class of occupations appear to have suffered the most?—Oh, decidedly the larger ones.

5901. You are of opinion that the larger the holdings, as a rule, the more they have suffered?—Yes, because they have had more capital to lay out in artificial manures, and in a bad season they have lost a great deal more than the others, who have not expended so much. Then, of course, I also think that the larger farmers employ more labour than the smaller farmers. Particularly in Cornwall, the farmers are a most hard-working race, and, especially when they have a family of sons, they can do with very few labourers, and as the price of labour has not fallen in proportion to the fall in the price of the produce, naturally the more outside labour is employed the greater will be the loss.

5902. In fact, it is upon farms of such a size that they can chiefly be cultivated by the family, that less loss has been incurred?—The less loss has been incurred.

5903. And in the case of the larger farms, it is the men who have made the greatest outlay who have been the greatest sufferers?—They have been the greatest sufferers. Then in some cases I have indicated in the margin here, some of the great farms have had a good deal of down land attached to them. Particularly is that the case in Wiltshire. The down land there is worth probably only one-tenth of what the other land is worth. If the good land attached to it were taken away, two of the farms, certainly, would go out of cultivation altogether. I mention that because one question arises with regard to the allotments.

Allotments.

5904. Are you speaking of any particular county now?—Wiltshire. The Duchy have granted allotments for more than 25 years, wherever there has been any desire to have them. The Duchy has virtually only one parish in this particular county, and there are over 45 acres granted in allotments. If more were required, they could only be taken from some of these large farms, and the result would immediately be if, I will say, from one farm 40 acres more were taken, a farm of very nearly 1,000 acres would have to close, because these 40 acres are worth probably 3*l.* an acre, whilst the down lands are worth 5*s.* an acre, and they could not carry on their business with the down lands alone.

5905. Do I understand this to be a more or less typical parish?—No, this is an exceptional parish.

5906. I understand you to say, in the case of this parish in Wiltshire of which you are speaking, that if 40 acres was forcibly taken from the large farm in the neighbourhood, it would result in the whole of the remainder of that farm being put out of cultivation?—Certainly.

5907. (*Mr. Long.*) May we ask the witness when he used the term "exceptional case," did he mean exceptional as regards the Duchy or exceptional as regards the county.

5908. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Would you kindly answer that question?—It is exceptional as regards the Duchy, owing to there being such a large extent of down land, and a comparatively small area of good land.

5909. (*Mr. Long.*) By that you mean only as regards the Duchy?—Yes.

5910. Not an exceptional case as regards the county?—I am perfectly sure, if there are other farms in the county under similar circumstances, where a great area of down land is occupied with a small area of good land, that if the good land were taken away forcibly then the farms would have to go out of cultivation altogether.

5911. (*Mr. Channing.*) And the thousand-acre farm, I suppose, belongs to the Duchy too?—That is so. In fact, I may say it has very nearly 800 acres of down land, and 200 acres of other land.

5912. (*Mr. Long.*) Will you kindly say whether this system which you have described is not the system almost universal in half the county of Wiltshire?—That I cannot say.

5913. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Is there anything to make you believe that what you described to us with regard to this particular farm on the estate of the Duchy of Cornwall is in any degree exceptional in that county?—I have no knowledge of other estates in the county of Wiltshire.

5914. Have you anything further you would wish to say to me?—No.

5915. (*Mr. Long.*) I would like to ask the name of the parish?—It is Mere.

Acreage.

5916. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) What is the acreage of the farms in Berkshire?—In Berkshire there are only two farms.

5917. What acreage?—The total acreage is 1,023.

5918. Any down land?—No.

Sale of property.

5919. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you sell land at all?—Whenever it appears profitable, we sell land in the neighbourhood of small provincial towns for building purposes. We have done that in the neighbourhood of Dorchester, in Dorset, where the Duchy property surrounds the town of Dorchester.

5920. You sell it in the ordinary way?—We sell it by auction generally.

5921. Not to tenants?—In nine cases out of ten it is sold by auction.

5922. You have not sold land to tenants as a system? No, I am not aware of a tenant having applied to purchase.

5923. How much do you allow to remain on mortgage?—We cannot allow any mortgage; the full amount must be paid.

Expenditure on improvements.

5924. What fund do you take the money for permanent improvements out of?—That is from the amounts realised by sales of Duchy property generally. This is, under the Duchy Management Act, 1863, applicable for permanent improvements, for purchase of other estates, or for the redemption of land tax. Part of it is also acquired by repayments from revenue.

LORD COBHAM here took the Chair.

5925. (*Lord Vernon.*) Are you paid back any money spent in permanent improvements?—Within 30 years the total is repaid, in instalments of one-thirtieth each.

5926. That costs you 5 per cent.?—It is virtually 5 per cent.; in the first years more, and of course it gradually comes to nothing.

5927. But even at that rate you find that rather cumbersome?—That is so heavy that at the present time the Duchy have to pay back to capital 8,000*l.*

5928. Then if you were an English landlord, who had to borrow money from the Lands Improvement Company and pay back 7*l.* 5*s.* per annum, you would consider it excessive?—We find 6 per cent. or 6¼ as it commences, rather heavy, because, owing to the peculiar circumstances, these improvements have to be made on estates from which the present owner of the Duchy may be said to have derived no profit whatever. On his coming into possession he has to expend the capital, on which he has to lose all the interest, and to repay the instalments.

Changes of tenancy.

5929. Have you had very many changes of tenancy?—Very few.

5930. By making reductions of rent you have kept your tenants?—In very bad seasons, and if one farm has been particularly seriously hit, there have been many occasions where a whole year's rent has been remitted; it is always according to the circumstances.

5931. Have you had many tenants who have expressed a desire to break their lease?—I do not think that there is any instance known that they wished to break their lease, because, whether they hold on lease or on annual tenancy, they get remissions and reductions of rent all the same.

Comparison between large and small farms.

5932. You say that the large farms have suffered the most. Why do you say that?—Because from the reports of the land steward, who knows them from personal inspection, we know that the circumstances are such that they require the largest remissions.

5933. You mean that you have been obliged to give the largest remissions of rents to those farmers who held the largest quantity of land?—Yes.

5934. (*Mr. Elton.*) Will you kindly tell me, for my information, where does that 30-year period of repayment come from; is it from an Act of Parliament?—Yes, the Duchy Management Act, 1863.

5935. It was not so at the beginning of the present revival of the Duchy of Cornwall?—It was not so, because the Duchy had no power to spend any capital before 1863.

5936. The Duchy, of course, was merged in the Crown?—The Duchy was merged in the Crown during the reigns of George IV. and William IV., and before the birth of the Prince of Wales.

5937. During all that long period you say there was no power to spend any capital?—There never was any attempt at it, because they had no power to sell except by special Act of Parliament.

5938. You mean, being Crown land it would be restricted from being sold by the Statute. I was not speaking about selling. I was speaking about spending capital?—There was no capital fund at all. In those days all the lands were let on leases for lives, on payment of a fine.

5939. Then there came a period during which the Duchy was managed without the help of this Act of Parliament?—Oh, no; it has always been managed under Acts of Parliament. There was an Act of Parliament in 1844.

5940. And that enabled them to manage the affairs of the Duchy until the Management Act of 1863?—Perfectly so; and from 1843 I may say no leases for lives were granted.

The Duchy estates.

5941–50. You gave us a list of the Duchy estates, but I think you only gave the agricultural estates?—Only the agricultural.

5951. Of course it has got other estates?—Oh, certainly.

5952. For instance, an estate near London?—We have very large estates in the south of London.

5953. Kennington, for instance?—Yes, but that, of course, is not agricultural property, and I am not prepared to go into figures.

5954. I want to get any ambiguity off the notes. Then where was that great case, Sir William Clayton's case?—That is Kennington.

5955. Then there is mineral property, I think you said?—Mineral property.

5956. Is any of the Somersetshire property mineral property?—There is some mineral property. There are a few collieries.

5957. (*Lord Cobham.*) You have kept that out of your evidence altogether?—Certainly. I have not got up any evidence with regard to that.

5958. (*Mr. Elton.*) It seemed ambiguous as to whether they were agricultural estates. I only wish to show the extent of the Duchy property?—I have no objection to state from memory, but I would not be bound by any figures.

5959. I merely wish to show that the agricultural estates you mentioned do not include all the Duchy estates?—They do not, but I may say that the net income of the Duchy is very nearly three-fourths from agricultural property—well, perhaps that is too much.

5960. There is a very considerable lot of building land, is there not?—None, except in London.

5961. You have spoken, I think, of a little building land at Dorchester?—Yes; we have sold 100 acres round Dorchester within the last 13 years.

5962. You were asked, I think, whether you had offered it to the tenant; but that is, I suppose, not Fordington Field?—No, in Fordington Field all the rights were bought up by the Duchy, and now Fordington Field does not exist.

5963. Is it divided up?—It is divided up into four farms.

5964. How big was the field?—I could not say.

5965. More than 1,000 acres?—The four farms are 2,000 acres.

5966. Then there was a field, till quite lately, containing more than 2,000 acres?—I may say nearly all the fences are wire fences.

Cornish tenants.

5967. These farmers in Cornwall have got on very well in the small tenancies, you told us?—Yes.

5968. Partly, of course, as you pointed out, through having sons to help them, and being very bustling, thriving kind of people?—Yes.

5969. Also is it not a fact that the smaller farmers in that part of Cornwall are accustomed to have other trades as well, to have shares in fishing?—I cannot give any evidence on those particular matters. I can only speak on the reports which come up to the Duchy office.

5970. You do not know whether they have other businesses as well?—I do not know. I should say not, because in so many cases they are far away from the coast.

5971. It is said that Cornish people have a share in a fishing and a mine, and a croft of land. Now about the Scilly Islands, I do not think you mentioned them?—No, because that is not agricultural property as such.

The Scilly Islands.

5972. Market gardens, rather, the Scilly Islands?—Market gardens, yes, but they are not included in any of these statements. The Scilly Islands measure about 3,600 acres, and they are held under special lease, and they are not agricultural land.

5973. It does not follow because they are leases they are not agricultural land, but, as a matter of fact, they are leased by the Duchy?—They are leased by the Duchy.

5974. In one lump?—In one lump.

5975. And therefore they form a separate property?—Entirely.

5976. They would hardly come under ordinary tables of calculations as to management and so on?—No; and in this case it could hardly be included, because the lease at present held is one which was granted on the surrender of a lease for lives.

5977. I can believe so well that what you say is correct, because a lease of that kind does not come within the details of your management?—No.

5978. But at the same time you do know that there is that large property, as to which we ought to get separate testimony if necessary as to the condition of that island. These islands do not come under your rules of management. Do you manage them or not?—We do not manage them, certainly not. They are held under a special lease.

5979. What is the name of the lessee?—Mr. Dorrien Smith.

5980. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) The Duchy has nothing to do with the management whatever?—No.

5981. (*Mr. Channing.*) The Duchy has not to pay any repairs, or anything?—No.

5982. (*Mr. Elton.*) Though it is Duchy property it does not come under their details of management?—No. I only spoke in all cases of what we call agricultural property in hand.

Expenditure on improvements.

5983. (*Mr. Channing.*) Mr. Elton has elicited that you get a rental from the Scilly Islands, and also from collieries, and estates, and houses, and so on, and I want to ask you whether you have to apply in the management of the Duchy lands, part of the proceeds of those other estates to the improvements and repairs on the agricultural land?—I may say that probably 80 per cent. of the capital spent on the agricultural land is derived from the sale of other property—not agricultural property, but I have no exact figures at hand.

5984. And from profits?—No; the repairs must be paid out of profits when the Duchy performs repairs, but the permanent improvements under Schedule I., Parts 1 and 2, of the Agricultural Holdings Act, are done out of capital.

5985. And they are not done out of the agricultural rents which you receive?—No; that is revenue.

5986. You have been asked about the 30 years, but there is also a limit of 30,000*l.* to the outstanding unpaid charges in respect of improvements. I want to know if that hampers you much?—That is in the Act of 1863, but was repealed in 1868, because in 1868 the 30,000*l.* limit which was originally allowed to be spent, was already then reached; and in 1868 that portion of the Act of 1863 was repealed, and the amount was made unlimited. I may state as a matter of fact 184,500*l.* have been spent by the Duchy since 1863 on permanent improvements to agricultural property.

5987–8. And the amount at any one time might be considerably over the 30,000*l.*?—As I say, it was reached in 1868 already, and then exceeded.

Dartmoor.

5989. I want to ask you a question about the farms near Prince Town on Dartmoor?—As to Dartmoor, I am not prepared to give any answers, because that can hardly be called agricultural land.

5990. You are not able to state whether the experimental cultivation of that land, which is bare moorland reclaimed, has been successful financially?—I cannot say. A considerable part of it is let to the Directors of Convict Prisons. There are other portions held by other people. But I am not acquainted with the results, except in so far that at Dartmoor also we have remitted some rents, and we have reduced some rents.

5991. (*Lord Cobham.*) To the Government?—No, not to the Government, but the Government hold probably 5 per cent. of the lands let.

Mr. M. Holsmann.
15 Dec. 1893.

5992. (*Mr. Channing.*) My information is that that farm has been worked at a profit. I thought possibly you might be able to throw light upon it?—I daresay; because of course they have convict labour, and therefore you could not compare that in any way with agricultural land.

5993. (*Lord Cobham.*) It is not in hand?—It is not in our hands.

Allotments.

5994. (*Mr. Channing.*) Now, about the allotments. Are you letting allotments in other counties, or only in Wiltshire?—Oh, in all the counties. I can only give the number of allotment tenants in those cases in which we let them to the tenants direct.

5995. But in some cases perhaps you let them to associations?—We let them in different ways. We let them in some cases to a committee of gentlemen who superintend the letting of the allotments. In recent cases we have let them to local authorities.

5996. Have you any rule about that?—No, there is no rule whatever. The only difficulty is, we could not very well let direct in all the Duchy parishes, because the Duchy property is so dreadfully scattered. We have property in upwards of 90 parishes, and to appoint superintendents of allotments would be absolutely impossible.

5997. Are you able to state what the average rent of the allotment land is, as compared with the farm lands?—I should say where we have let it direct, and also where we have let it to a committee, we have reduced the rent there also. When the depression took place, when we reduced the rents on the farms, the rents of the allotments were also reduced by 20 per cent.

5998. My question was rather whether the allotment land was let at approximately the same rate as the farm land?—I cannot say that; because, of course, it depends entirely on the quality of the land, as I have pointed out before. In that case in Wiltshire one acre of land on one farm may be worth 3*l.* an acre, and another only 5*s.* The land of the Duchy varies enormously, and therefore in some cases we may let it at a rate, say, of 5*d.* per perch, and others probably for 4*d.* per perch.

5999. Take this Wiltshire parish that you referred to. If I understand you aright, there would be 40 acres which would be the best part of your 1,000-acre farm, and I suppose that would be a similar quality of land to the land let to the allotment tenants, would it not?—That I am not prepared to say, because I had simply an exceptional case in my mind, where we were applied to, to break up those 40 acres of permanent pasture—most valuable land—for allotments in addition to those already existing but probably with a view of giving up the allotments which they had at present.

6000. Which, presumably, were not such good land?—Probably so. In Mere, the allotments are held by a number of artisans. There is a silk factory, and some of these workmen are not very well acquainted with husbandry, and the result is the land becomes bad.

6001. May I ask you just this one question in conclusion? What is the rent of this 45 acres of allotments in this Wiltshire parish?—I speak without having the figures before me, but I should think that is let probably at 2*l.* per acre; I could not vouch for it absolutely.

Farms in Devonshire.

6002. (*Mr. Lambert.*) In what part of Devonshire are your farms?—In Bradninch, not very far from Bristol and Exeter.

Reduction of rent.

6003. And what reduction of rents have you in that parish?—I cannot say exactly. I have not divided them according to the parishes.

6004. But you have not made anything like 20 per cent. reduction?—I think it is considerably more. The leaseholds were let for 29*s.* per acre and they are now let at 15*s.* 9*d.* per acre. The annual tenancies were let for 33*s.* per acre, and they are now let for 20*s.* 4*d.* per acre.

Dartmoor.

6005. You have a considerable amount of land on Dartmoor, I believe?—Yes.

6006. And that is taken together?—That is not taken into account because all those statements are exclusive of Dartmoor. Owing to its being such rough pasture you cannot compare it with any farming land in any way, because the estate on Dartmoor covers 56,000 acres, and I suppose we get 2,000*l.* a year from it.

6007. And what other parts of the county belong to the Duchy?—The manor of Bradford, which is close on the border of Cornwall.

6008. It is very poor land, I suppose?—Yes.

6009. How are your farms let—by tender?—When we cannot find a tenant by private arrangement.

6010. Do you get many applications by advertising when letting?—I can only, within my recollection, think of actually one farm having had to be let by tender, when we got 12 applicants for it.

Shooting rights.

6011. How about the game? Does the shooting belong to the tenants?—All the shooting belongs to the tenants. There is no reservation made of any kind.

6012. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You have no land unlet?—There is no land unlet except the woodland and waste land.

Concessions to tenants.

6013. How do you account for that? A great many landlords find it impossible to let their land?—As I have stated, the Council have found it desirable to avoid getting land into hand, and in consequence we have made the utmost concessions. As I have stated, in some cases rather than have land on our hand, we have let it without any rent.

6014. You would accept any conditions from a tenant?—From a good tenant.

6015. Rather than keep it in hand yourself?—Yes; we have good tenants owing to the considerate treatment they have received.

Cornish tenants.

6016. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Cornish tenants are mostly small holders?—I would not say that.

6017. Are not they chiefly small holders?—There are a great many of them.

6018. And they are more prosperous than the large holders in other places?—If I might read a few figures out of this statement it will show you that in the whole of Cornwall, out of 20,000 acres, there are only three farms over 500 acres, 16 farms between 200 and 500 acres, 31 between 100 and 200 acres. There are, however, 44 between 40 and 100, 34 between 20 and 40, and 118 between 1 and 20 acres.

Market gardening.

6019. Is not the prosperity of Cornish small holders due to the fact that they cultivate a quantity of vegetables?—I would not venture to say that they are prosperous. I would say that they are hard working people, and they manage to make both ends meet by hard work.

6020. Is that by market garden cultivation?—I could not say what is their cultivation. I only take the figures as they are known in the Duchy office.

6021. You do not, as a fact, know that there is a good deal of market gardening in Cornwall?—I could not say.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to Thursday next at 12 o'clock.

Twelfth Day.

Thursday, 21st December 1893.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. BARON VERNON.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.

JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
WALTER HUME LONG, Esq.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
FREEMAN THOMAS, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

The Right Hon. Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH, Bart., M.P., called and examined.

Right Hon. Sir M. Hicks-Beach, Bart., M.P.

21 Dec. 1893.

6022. (*Chairman.*) You, I think, gave evidence before the Duke of Richmond's Commission in 1880 and 1881?—Yes, I did.

6023. You then stated that you were the owner of 3,700 acres in Gloucestershire and an estate of about 8,000 acres in Wiltshire?—Yes.

Depression prior to 1881.

6024. And you gave evidence as to the depression which existed in that part of the country?—Yes.

6025. You then stated, I think, that the depression was mainly attributable to bad seasons, coupled to some extent with low prices—to the extent that prices had not risen in proportion to the deficiency of the harvests?—Yes, I think that was the general effect of my evidence.

6026. Since then you have had the further experience of 12 years, and I am afraid it has not been very much more satisfactory?—Matters are very much worse than they were then.

Reductions in rent prior 1881.

6027. Will you state briefly your experience in the interval between 1881 and the present time?—In my evidence before the Duke of Richmond's Commission, I made some general statements as to the fall in my rental between 1876 and 1880.

6028 1876 was about the highest point, I think?—I do not know that I am quite prepared to say that rents had not begun to fall before that time.

6029. And between that year and 1881, when you gave your evidence, they had already fallen to some extent?—Yes, there had been a considerable fall, owing mainly to the season of 1879, which was, of course, a very bad one.

6030. Since then have the temporary abatements been made permanent and serious reductions of rent become necessary?—Perhaps we had better deal with the two properties separately, because of course the circumstances are not quite the same.

6031. Your property in Gloucestershire is on the Cotswold Hills, is it not?—Yes, on the eastern slope of the Cotswold Hills, sloping towards the Thames.

Reduction of rent in Gloucestershire.

6032. What has been the reduction of rent there?—I gave evidence to the Duke of Richmond's Commission to the effect that in the year 1876 with regard to six farms, the acreage of which I named at that time, the rents varied from 26*s.* 9*d.* to 20*s.* per acre. In 1880 they varied from 22*s.* to 14*s.* per acre, the 22*s.* per acre being the case of an exceptionally small farm of 200 acres; and in 1893, at the present moment, they vary from 12*s.* to 8*s.* per acre, the 8*s.* being an exceptional case, a farm of very poor light land to which I was also obliged to make a special allowance because the tenant, in the drought of this year, was left without water at all for more than three months, and had to draw it for 2¼ miles.

Right Hon. Sir M. Hicks-Beach, Bart., M.P.

21 Dec. 1893.

6033. That would be a reduction of about 50 per cent.?—Rather more than that.

6034. With that reduction have you been able to keep your tenants?—My great object throughout has been as a matter of self-interest to keep my tenants, because where a man is farming well it is more important to keep a man of that class to let a farm at a higher rent to a man who would work it out in three or four years.

6035. Have you been able to keep your tenants with those reductions?—With one exception,—the case of a tenant in Wiltshire, who gave up my farm because he bought one for himself; he bought it with money made in his occupation as a large sheep-dealer,—I have kept all my tenants.

6036. Then in the Wiltshire property has the reduction been about the same?—Yes, I could give similar evidence with regard to a large property adjoining my own in Gloucestershire, if the Commission would like to have it.

6037. Will you state the details of that property?—That is a property of about 5,000 acres. A small addition has been made to it in the interval between 1867 and 1893. The rental of that property, taking the whole of it, not merely farms, but cottages and other occupations as well, was 25*s.* 10*d.* per acre in 1867. The rental in 1893, calculated on the same basis in both cases, deducting for land tax and tithes, is 11*s.* 7*d.* per acre, which shows a reduction of 55 per cent., probably about the same as my own. Then I may say that in 1867 the rents of those farms—I have got a list of their acreage here; they vary from one very large farm of 1,400 acres (which has since been divided into two farms) to farms of 687 acres, 662 acres, 441 acres, 487 acres, and 402 acres.—farms of that size in 1867 varied from 31*s.* 9*d.* to 22*s.* per acre. In 1893 they varied from 12*s.* 9*d.* to as low as 8*s.* 5*d.* per acre.

6038. Is this the Wiltshire property you are speaking of?—This is in Gloucestershire. This is not my property, it is a property adjoining mine. It was purchased by the present owner in 1867, and he has spent a very large sum of money upon it in improvements of all kinds, and that is the result.

Reductions of rent in Wiltshire.

6039. Now with regard to the Wiltshire property, what do you say?—In my neighbourhood, which is the hill country of Salisbury Plain, there has been an enormous reduction in the value of land during the interval of which I speak. I know an instance of a farm of about 800 acres adjoining my own property, including a very good house and garden, with some good water meadow and a number of cottages, and a larger proportion of good arable land than is usual on that class of farm; I have been told that about 30 years ago it was sold for 26,000*l.* and two years ago it was sold for less than 8,000*l.* The buildings and cottages were in very bad repair, which of course reduced the value to some extent.

6040. Was it sold with the tenant or without the tenant?—It was tenanted when sold. It was purchased by the man I have already mentioned, who was a large sheep-dealer, and who gave up one of my farms when he had bought this one. The mortgagees had foreclosed, and that is how it came to be sold. Adjoining me on the other side is a very good sporting property of more than 3,000 acres which has been in the market for years, and without any result.

6041. What has been the reduction of the rents on your Wiltshire property?—Well, I should explain that the farms are rather peculiar ones in that country. They run in long strips from the River Avon to the Down, each has its bit of water meadow. Some better class arable and then at the upper end large pieces of down and light arable, much of which is now really worthless, so that the rent per acre is no more a fair test of the value of decent land in that country than it would be a test in a hill-farming district in Scotland or the north of England.

6042. The farm includes a great deal of down land, I think?—It includes a great deal of down land. I have here, for instance, a farm of 1,470 acres of mine, which includes 600 acres of down, and another of 973 acres including 500 acres of down, and another of 1,718 acres, with 660 acres of down, and so on, all that down land being valuable only as a sheep run, the value of which is always low. But in 1876 the rental of those farms such as I have described varied from 22*s.* to 14*s.* per acre. The higher rental of course was that of the smaller farms with less down land. In 1880 the rental varied from 16*s.* 9*d.* to 10*s.* per acre; in 1893 the rental varied from 10*s.* 6*d.* to 7*s.* 2*d.* per acre. In addition to that I have been obliged to make this year temporary allowances of 15 per cent., or in one or two cases a little more, which of course may or may not become permanent.

Causes of the depression.

6043. Was that due to the exceptionally bad drought of this year?—To the exceptionally bad drought of this year and the low prices.

6044. But apart from this year should you say that the reductions have been due to continuous bad seasons or to low prices?—I think to low prices.

6045. Then it differs somewhat from the position in 1881, when you gave evidence before the Duke of Richmond's Commission. At that time you held that the depression was mainly due to bad seasons?—At that time we only had experience of three or four years, and now our experience has extended over a much longer period, within which there certainly have been good seasons.

Expenditure on improvements.

6046. During that same period have you been compelled to make a considerable outlay upon your two properties?—For the last 35 years, ever since I have been in possession of my properties, I have practically spent my income upon them. About the time that I gave evidence before the Duke of Richmond's Commission I began to curtail my expenditure on account of the fall of rents, and ever since then I have been compelled to curtail it still more, so that now I am able to do very little beyond ordinary maintenance.

6047. Then up to lately you have spent the greater part of your income in improvements?—Yes, in improvements.

Burdens on land.

6048. And you could only limit it lately by the income having fallen in so much?—Yes. I should perhaps say with regard to the property in Wiltshire that the permanent burdens upon it are very heavy. I have two cases here out of the farms I have named; on one farm the tithe at the reduced value, and the land tax together, amount to five-elevenths of the gross rent which I have received this year.

6049. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What is the acreage?—It is a large acreage, but there is a large amount of down; it is 1,470 acres.

6050. (*Chairman.*) What is the rent?—Those two charges amount to five-elevenths of the rent. On another farm, a large acreage of more than 1,700 acres, the tithe and the land tax together are very nearly half of the gross rent, deducting the temporary allowances I have made.

Land in hand.

6051. You have got one farm in hand yourself, I think?—I have a farm in hand in Gloucestershire if the Commission like to hear anything about that.

6052. How long have you worked it yourself?—Well, I always had part in hand, the park and other grass land which I occupied with the house when I used to live in Gloucestershire. That was about 100 acres. Then in 1880, as I told the Richmond Commission, I had to take 370 acres of poor arable in hand, which had been rented by a tenant who had failed. That I farmed until the autumn of 1886 with fairly good results for about three years, until my bailiff, who was an old man, became ill and eventually died, with the result that the farm was left by him in anything but the condition that it ought to have been. In 1886 I was obliged to take another 280 acres in hand, being, so to speak, the top end—the poor end—of a large farm which I then divided. The farm was 77 acres, and it is now 435 acres. I left the 435 acres, the better part of the farm, with the tenant, and took the poorer part of it in hand; so that altogether since 1886 I have had 750 acres in hand. As I said in 1886 it was not in good order, and, of course, one lost money for the first two years; but the net result of my five years farming, up to Michaelmas 1892, has been that I have had 5 per cent. on the capital with which I stocked the farm, and an average rental of 250*l.* a year on the 750 acres. Of course I have had in addition the sporting value of the land, which is something, and I have kept a herd of 120 deer, in the deer park, so that up to 1892 I do not think I did very badly. Then this last year has been positively disastrous. We have had in that county two droughts, one up to the end of July, and the other after, I think beginning about the middle of August, with the practical result that we have had no hay and no aftermath, and we have been obliged to sell off a good deal of store stock early (which I intended to fat in the winter), at very low rates, and for the year ending Michaelmas 1893 I certainly shall make very little rent, even if I make the full interest on my capital.

6053. Then this last year has been very disastrous owing to the seasons?—This year is a disastrous one. I have separated it because it is not a fair thing to take it as a sample.

6054. Up to last year, as you have stated, you made interest on your capital and rent, though not a large one?—I should say that with regard to the land which I had in hand, with the exception of the 100 acres of old pasture, the principal part of it is the poorest land that I own.

Large and small farms compared.

6055. Are you able to say whether the large farms or the small ones have passed through this period of depression?—My experience is so much confined to large farms that I could not speak very much of smaller ones; but so far as it has come within my observation I have no doubt that the large farms have suffered most. In the last 50 years, until comparatively a recent date, all persons writing or speaking with regard to the improvement of landed property were unanimous in impressing upon landowners that they ought to throw their farms together in order to obtain tenants with large capital, and thus have the land better cultivated. I do not think that the result has been a success financially, and I am quite sure it has led to a good deal of ill-feeling between farmers and their labourers.

6056. The number of small farms by which labourers could rise to better positions has been enormously diminished, I presume?—Yes. In many parts of the country where small farms certainly existed in greater numbers than they do now—before the time of which I speak—there is really no opening for a labourer to take a small farm.

6057. This "opening" that you speak of is the cause of the ill-feeling between the labourers and the farmers?—There is no intermediate class.

Sub-division of farms.

6058. Do you think that there are many of these large farms in your district that might be broken up with advantage to the smaller owners?—Of course in a purely sheep-farming district—and both of the districts to which I have alluded may be called sheep-farming districts—of course Salisbury Plain is essentially so, you cannot have many small farms. Most of the land could only be worked through sheep-farming, and small farms and sheep-farming scarcely go together. But I have no doubt there might be more small farms than there are, because there were more 50 years ago.

6059. I presume one reason which militates against their being called into existence again is the one of capital outlay in buildings?—The landlords are in the position which I have described; they can hardly sell their property if they find themselves unable to keep it up properly, and they certainly are unable, if they retain their properties, to find capital to put up the necessary buildings for small farms.

Expenditure on improvements.

6060. Is that the general condition of the landowners in the district?—I have no doubt in my own mind that, taking the whole of the hill districts of Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, not a single landlord, large or small, is in a position to improve his property now from the rent that he derives from it.

6061. The rents are so reduced as compared with what they were a few years ago, that the landlord has no longer any margin with which to make improvements?—Very many of them, I am quite sure, must have the very greatest possible difficulty in maintaining buildings and cottages.

6062. Have you borrowed for the purpose of improvements from the Lands Improvement Company?—Yes, I have to some extent, but it is a very expensive process. I have here the published terms of one of the companies, the Lands Improvement Company, and no doubt the Commission are acquainted with them; but perhaps I may shortly say that the loans are repayable in 25 years, an addition of about 7 per cent. has to be made in every case for the expenses of the Company, so that, to quote the instance they give, if you borrow 2,000*l.*, you have to pay 2,140*l.*, and the terms are for loans up to 200*l.*. 6*l.* 12*s.* 4*d.* per cent. per annum for 25 years; for loans between 200*l.* and 500*l.*, 6*l.* 10*s.* 8*d.* per cent. per annum for 25 years, and for loans from 500*l.* upwards, 6*l.* 7*s.* 4*d.* per cent. per annum for 25 years.

6063. Making it a somewhat heavy charge?—Making it a very heavy charge for the loan.

State loans for improvements.

6064. Have you considered the expediency of the State lending money at more reasonable rates for the purposes of improvement?—I made that suggestion long ago in my evidence to the Richmond Commission, and I have frequently repeated it since. I see no reason whatever why, when money is advanced for such a purpose in Ireland, it should not be advanced in Great Britain if it is needed, and under present circumstances it is needed.

6065. Would you give all the landlords in your district these advances, as they seem to be unable to afford any improvements at the present moment?—I do not say that, because of course there are many landlords in that district as in other parts of England, whose income is largely derived from other sources than the ownership of land.

6066. But where they are merely owners of land, and have no other property, do you consider them unable to spend all the money necessary for the improvements of their estates?—There is no margin in the rental for it.

6067. Have you considered what difference it would make if money were advanced by the State on the terms that the advances are made in Ireland?—Well, that is of course a matter of calculation. In Ireland the terms are under several Acts relating to the subject. The terms for advances to landowners would be 3½ per cent. interest, repayable within a period of 22 years, and in one class of cases that term may be extended to 40 years, which materially eases the repayment.

6068. How would that work out as compared with 6*l.* 12*s.* and 6*l.* 10*s.* that you spoke of charged by the Land Improvement Companies?—I have not the figures showing the difference. Of course there would be a material difference.

6069. A material reduction?—Not merely in the rate for interest, but also because, as I have pointed out, an addition has to be made in the sum borrowed in the case of those companies in England for the expenses of the company; and the addition for similar purposes made in the case of advances by the Board of Works in Ireland is so trifling as to be almost nothing.

6070. Therefore there would be a considerable relief if money were lent by the State in the same manner as is done in Ireland?—Yes; a considerable relief. This brings me to a very important matter. I am serving now as a member of the Royal Commission on Labour, and being interested in agriculture myself, I have given special attention to the reports of the Assistant Commissioners whom we have sent about the country to inquire into the condition of the agricultural labourers, and particularly into the condition of their dwellings. There has been a very general consensus of opinion on the part of those Assistant Commissioners that, although very much has been done of late years to improve labourers' cottages in Great Britain, very much remains to be done; and I confess, under such circumstances as those to which I have referred, I do not see how it is possible for the necessary improvements in labourers' cottages to be brought about without some facilities of the kind are given to private landowners. I wish to point out in order to meet objections which have been made—it would be perfectly possible to provide, in return for such advantages, that there should be periodical inspection of the cottages built during the period of repayment, so as to secure that they would be kept in good order; that conditions should be laid down as to the rents at which they should be let; and as to the conditions of tenancy. The rents of cottages now built by large landowners are generally so low that I am quite sure there will be no real difficulty in making proper conditions of that kind. I think that the possibility of landowners, whether large or small, obtaining advances of the kind, should be a great inducement to small purchasers of land. I am sure there are many persons even in the position of agricultural labourers in the country who would be glad to purchase land, especially if land could be purchased by way of instalments, as it is now frequently sold by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and might be sold by ordinary landowners. I am sure that there are many labourers who would be too glad to purchase land in that way if they could obtain a loan for the purpose of erecting a cottage on it at a reasonable rate. I think that a great deal might be done to bring the labourers on to the land, so to speak, in the way I have indicated.

State loans for improvement of labourers' cottages.

6071. To give them fixity of tenure?—To give them real fixity of tenure; they would be freeholders.

6072. In the cases of the advances for labourers cottages in Ireland, if I recollect aright, the local authorities have power to buy the land compulsorily for the purpose, and then rent the cottages themselves?—Yes.

6073. And become practically landlords to the labourers?—They become landlords.

State loans for erection of cottages.

6074. I was going to ask whether, you would advise that that process should be adopted of lending money to the landowners for the erection of cottages?—Please remember when I speak of landlords I do not speak of owners of large properties alone. I attach greater importance to advances to small owners than to large owners, But I want these things to be done. There is no doubt that labourers' dwellings require improvement to a very great extent, and I see no other way in which it can be done. I do not think that the system to which you allude has been a very great success in Ireland. I think the rate of interest charged by the State is in some cases as low as 3¼ per cent., but if the Commission were to look at the reports which were made by our Assistant Commissioners to the Royal Commission on Labour on this subject, they would find that this Act has been by no means adopted throughout Ireland generally. It has been largely adopted in Munster and Leinster; hardly at all in Connaught or in Ulster; and probably in Connaught the state of the cottages is worse than anywhere else, but the unions were too poor to adopt the Act. The reports that I have mentioned refer to scamped work by the builders of these cottages, owing to the absence of proper superintendence, of course, on the part of the guardians. In other cases the cottages, when built and inhabited, are not properly kept, because the people are not civilized enough to keep them properly, and there is nobody to look after them, and the financial result has been anything but satisfactory. The rents charged are necessarily low, and are not by any means properly collected in several cases.

6075. I presume the local authorities find considerable difficulty in collecting the rents from a large body of small holders?—At any rate they do not collect them, and the whole transaction must necessarily result in a burden upon the rates, because no rents that could be charged would come up to the amount that would be required for repayment of the loans; but it results in a very much larger burden than it ought to because the rents are not properly collected. And further, we have evidence of a very dangerous demand—arising from those labourers who have not had the good fortune to obtain cottages of this class, that they should be supplied with cottages at equally low rents in a similar way, and the universal adoption of a plan of that kind would practically ruin the ratepayers.

6076. I rather gather that you recommend, in preference to the Irish case, that money should be advanced to owners of land, whether large owners or small owners, for the purpose of erecting these cottages, rather than that the local authorities should themselves become builders?—I think so.

State loans for constructing light railways.

6077. Do you think that a further example might be taken from Ireland in the case of rural tramways?—Well, the Commission are aware that very much has been done for Ireland in the matter both of loans of money and of grants of money to promote those means of communication in the poorer districts. Even in England there are districts now remote from railways in which some cheap means of communication of that kind would be of very great advantage, but which they certainly cannot provide for themselves, and which it would not pay an ordinary speculator to provide for them. The large railway companies naturally no more care than the large Irish companies did to promote extensions which would not pay their cost. I do not see why there should not be some means of making advances by the Government, of course under careful conditions to secure the proper working of such railways and their proper construction, in England as in Ireland.

6078. Would you say that the light railways should be undertaken by the local authorities or by the landlords?—I think that the example of the Irish light railways might be followed. The larger companies were invited to undertake them on certain terms, I believe, and that secures their proper construction and their future working.

Allotments.

6079. Is there much demand in your district on the part of the labouring men for small holdings?—There is a great demand for allotments, that is to say, allotments of an acre, and many of those who have obtained such allotments and work them satisfactorily, as I am bound to say is generally the case, desire more. I have let a considerable amount of land in the parish in which I am living now in small tenancies of that kind, ranging from 7 acres downwards.

6080. Are they taken by men who employ themselves as labourers in this way?—The larger ones would not be taken, of course, by men who are actual agricultural labourers, but I believe there are men, actual agricultural labourers, who are occupying as much as 2 acres, and doing it well.

6081. Is it with spade cultivation, or is much of the 2 acres in grass land?—They very often get it ploughed for them, and pay for its being ploughed.

6082. Should you think that could be extended?—I am sure it might be extended. Of course it would only apply to land near the village where you have cottages grouped together in villages, or to land within a reasonable distance of a cottage.

Major Poore's experiments.

6083. Has there been an experiment in this district by Major Poore?—Yes; I think that is a case into which the Commissioners ought to inquire. I can only speak generally of it, because unfortunately, although I have seen the place, I have not got the precise facts, but I may say generally it is situated at Winterslow, near Salisbury. The labouring population is not confined to ordinary agricultural employment, but many of them work in the winter in the large woods near the parish. Major Poore purchased at a very cheap rate, rather less than a 200-acre farm, which I heard was let practically for the payment of the tithe before he bought it. He then sold off the homestead and about 80 acres to an individual, leaving part of the money on mortgage, and sold off the remainder, about 112 acres, in small plots. It is rather a curious arrangement that he has made, and one of a rather complicated character, the purchasers of these small lots are in something like the same position as copyholders, and they are to pay the purchase money by instalments.

6084. I suppose the rest, as it were, is fined down by instalments to a point when the permanent rental will be very much less than the real rent and more like a copyhold payment; something of that kind?—I do not think there will be any payment after the lapse of a certain number of years.

6085. And that is an inducement to them to become owners, I suppose?—Yes. I saw myself that they had built a couple of cottages on two of those allotments, although the scheme was only started a year and a half ago, and there are some other buildings.

6086. At all events it shows a desire on the part of the labourers of that district to become permanently connected with the land?—Yes.

Condition of tenant farmers.

6087. Referring for a moment to your own farm, I think you said until last year you had not done badly in respect of your own farm; you had paid interest upon your capital and you had made a rent, although not a large rent. With that experience, do you think that the tenant farmers in the district may have had the same experience where their rents had been largely reduced?—I do not think the tenant farmers of the district, where their rents have been largely reduced, suffered very much until this year; but I do not think they made money.

6088. They held on?—They held on.

6089. Neither losing nor gaining much?—Yes.

6090. But of course this year has been a disastrous one for them?—Yes.

6091. But apart from that it would seem that the very large reductions of rent have met, to a very large extent, the difficulties of the position?—Well, they have kept people going who were actually on the land; but there is no inducement, so far as I know, in the present position of farming in that district to attract persons to become farmers. So that, of course, when existing tenants leave or die out, it would be no very easy matter to replace them.

Difficulty of letting.

6092. When farms have fallen vacant, have you found great difficulty, when you have had any vacancies in the last 12 years, to find tenants?—A farm in Wiltshire fell into my hands at Michaelmas 1892. It was the case of a light land farm, a down farm, 640 acres, which the tenant left because he purchased the farm of which I have spoken. The rent of it was only 250*l.* for 640 acres; but I never had a single offer for it, nor any suggestion from anybody that he would take it at any price. I had to take it in hand, and I have now succeeded in letting it on a long lease to an owner of racehorses, who has converted the buildings into a training stable, and I have undertaken to lay it down to grass myself, and then he will pay me the old rent.

6093. There are no competitors?—There are no competitors for farms of that class. That was a poor farm of light down land, which, of course, would be the worst.

6094. But in the case of the better farms, do you say that it is possible to let them, or not?—I think there would be very considerable difficulty with the larger farms.

6095. From want of men of capital, I presume?—Yes.

Assessment to rates.

6096. Have the tenants in your district got the full benefit of their reductions of rent in their assessment for local taxation?—Of course where the reductions have been permanent, they have.

6097. You think that they have had the full benefit?—I have no doubt of it.

Loans for improvements.

6098. (*Lord Vernon.*) In regard to this question of raising money for permanent improvements, do you not think it would be a very simple arrangement that the trustees should be allowed to raise money for permanent improvements themselves?—The life-owners of settled estates can obtain loans from the improvement companies for improvements of property.

6099. But I gathered from what you said that the rate from the Improvements Company is 6*l.* 12*s.* 4*d.*, plus, you said, 7 per cent. commission?—Yes.

6100. Therefore that works out, as I make it, to about 7*l.* 5*s.* 0*d.* per annum?—The 6*l.* 12*s.* 4*d.* is the rate for the smaller loans; the larger loans above 500*l.* are 6*l.* 7*s.* 4*d.*

6101. But working them out, the annual charge, as I make it out, comes to about 7*l.* 5*s.* 0*d.* on the actual expenditure?—Well, of course, I take your figures; they could only apply to 6*l.* 12*s.* 4*d.*, I imagine.

6102. If trustees could raise money, as they can now, at 3½ per cent., do you think there would be any objection to their raising money and the life tenant spending it in the same way as now, money resulting from the sales of property under Lord Cairns' Act?—I think there should be provision for repayment by annual instalments.

6103. Why more so than under Lord Cairns' Settled Estates Act?—I am not prepared to say that it would not have been better to have had such a provision in that Act, because after all those improvements, though permanent, are not everlasting.

6104. But the tenant for life in succession, keeps them in repair, or is supposed to, and practically does so?—Speaking quite offhand, without having considered the question, I do not quite see why any power given under Lord Cairns' Act should not apply.

6105. Because in that way the tenant for life could raise money at 3½ per cent., and only pay 3½ per cent., with the obligation of keeping them in repair, instead of paying 7*l.* 5*s.* a year?—Yes.

Small holdings.

6106. I think you said that it would be a good thing if land could be sold to small holders by instalments, and I think you said it was done in some districts?—It is done by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, I happen to know, because I am one at the present moment.

6107. Does not the law of entail prevent the sale of land by instalments?—You mean that no settled property could be sold to a purchaser paying by instalments.

6108. Yes?—I am not prepared to answer that question; I do not know.

State loans for erection of labourers' cottages.

6109. I am given to understand that it is. Then you suggested that cottages should be built with money advanced to life tenants, and that they should be let at a low rent; is it not the fact that the cottages as a rule in England, in agricultural districts, are let at so low a rent that they not only yield no interest, but hardly enough to keep them in tenantable repair?—That, I think, is true of cottages belonging to the larger owners, not of those belonging to the smaller owners, so far as my experience goes.

6110. Then you said that the ratepayers would be ruined if the cottages were put up as they had been in Ireland?—I did not quite say that; I said that a demand had arisen in Ireland, according to the reports of the Assistant Commissioners of the Labour Commission, from labourers generally, that all labourers should be put in the same position as to having cottages provided for them at the expense of boards of guardians as those labourers who are now living in cottages so provided, and that if instead of the arrangement which was now only of course applied to a very small comparative number, all the cottages were so provided, the ratepayers must be ruined.

6111. Then in referring to this estate that you said had been cut up, you said you had seen cottages erected upon it, do you think it is advisable to attract labourers in that way to the land, unless you are almost sure that they can make a fairly good income of it?—I said that in that case the circumstances were peculiar. The parish is in the neighbourhood of some very large woods, where there is frequent employment, perhaps I might almost say constant employment, during the winter, and therefore those persons are not in the position of ordinary agricultural labourers. I do not myself think that planting the agricultural labourers on small allotments without a reasonable prospect of their being able to earn wages also, would be any good to them.

6112. It would not be much use unless they had some subsidiary employment, I suppose?—They must have some subsidiary employment or other.

Powers of tenants for life.

6113. (*Mr. Elton.*) I should be glad to hear your views with reference to what you said about the desirability of fixity of tenure of cottages. Would you consider that it would be a reasonable policy to adopt to allow tenants for life to grant small pieces of land at what you may call ground rents or chief rents, using the analogy that you used about copyholds? At present they can only sell for a fixed price at a lump sum, except with the leave of the court in special cases. But would you consider that it would carry out the policy which you mention to allow tenants for life to sell plots to cottagers at practically on a freehold ground rent?—You know much better than I do the powers of tenants for life.

6114. I assume that the tenant for life has not the power to do it now. But would it not carry out the policy you suggested if the tenants for life were able to do that?—I should be glad to give the tenant for life as full power as possible, consistent with the maintenance of the estate in trust.

6115. That is a complete answer. Then you have already pointed out that it would be a good policy for an estate to have agricultural labourers, and in certain cases attracting them by fixity of tenure?—I did not say "fixity of tenure." What I said was "conditions of tenancy."

6116. I thought you said "fixity of tenure"?—That was not my intention.

6117. Permanent tenancy is what I mean?—That was when I was speaking of loans to owners of land for the purpose of building cottages.

Loans for improvements.

6118. Of course what you said about the expense of those land improvement loans is taken subject to the fact that at present the trustees can apply what is called the land money or money to be laid out in land in redeeming those loans as at present?—Yes.

6119. So that that would reduce the interest at once in those special cases?—Yes.

6120. And therefore those charges may be redeemed, and they may also apply their money in permanent improvements in the way you mentioned?—Yes; of course you are speaking of cases where the trustees of the settled estate have money which they can so apply.

6121. Yes, land settled to be laid out?—But that is not by any means the case in every settled property, I am afraid.

6122. I put my question rather carefully, that what you said as a general rule is subject to the exception of cases where the trustees have not money which they can apply?—Yes.

6123. Do you know Mr. Squarey, whose works I have read?—I know him by name.

Sub-division of farms.

6124. I recollect reading a work by Mr. Squarey in which he said that the old tenure in Wiltshire consisted of small farms, copyholds in lots of about 40 acres with large rights of pasturage, and very old farmhouses and homesteads which are now generally consolidated into larger farms. Would that be at all correct in your experience?—I think the lifehold system was a very favourite system in Wiltshire. When I first came into possession of my property there were several cottages upon it which had been let out by my ancestors in that way, and the invariable result was that when the lives fell in the cottages fell in.

6125. It varies in different districts. Would those old homesteads and houses be practically available now towards reconstituting such small holdings as we have been speaking of?—No, because the buildings no longer exist, as a rule.

6126. I ask because I know a district, not in Wiltshire, where they are better built, and they exist still, and could be used; but that is not the case in your experience?—No.

6127. (*Mr. Channing.*) I think in your evidence before the Richmond Commission you spoke of the Wiltshire estates as having been valued in 1855 on the basis of the prices of the chief commodities then?—Yes.

6128. The prices given were 6*s.* for wheat, 4*s.* for barley, 6*d.* per lb. for mutton, 1*s.* per lb. for wool, 1*s.* per lb. for butter, and 6*d.* per lb. for cheese?—Yes; butter and cheese were practically inapplicable, because they are not produced in that district.

Reductions of rent.

6129. Your evidence shows that you made very substantial reductions within a very short period of the severe depression setting in. I think in your evidence in 1881 you stated that you had made very large reductions in both those estates, if I remember right?—Yes.

6130. And the reductions named to-day are still greater—very considerably greater?—Very considerably greater.

6131. The question I want to ask, then, is whether you have not, in fact, reduced your rents very considerably more than the fall in prices since the time at which the valuation was first made; it seems so to me?—My rents are infinitely below the point at which they were fixed by the valuation of 1855.

6132. That is what I was inferring, and that you had really reduced your rents more largely than the mere fall in prices seemed to require?—Certainly; but then, of course, the fall in prices is not the only element. The rents which I gave as having been paid in 1876 were practically the rents of the valuation of 1855, with

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two or three exceptions, in which new tenants had come in, and the rents had been increased.

6133. And therefore landlords had to consider a great many other questions besides the question of prices?—Yes.

State loans.

6134. A question has been brought before us on which I should like to ask your opinion. You have expressed a very strong opinion that the State might with advantage to agriculture make loans to landlords and to small owners of land as well as to large owners of land at a low rate of interest. The suggestion has been made to us that in the present state of prices and the present want of capital of landlords with large estates, it might be advisable to extend the principle of loans to tenants also on a joint security; what is your opinion on that?—My experience as a landowner is certainly this: that no tenant wishes to spend a penny in permanent improvements, and very often it is quite as much as he can do to provide capital for the proper cultivation of his farm, and that he would not join in such security, if he did, his security might not be worth much.

6135. Under present conditions; but if the agricultural tenant had some form of security of tenure, with some greater certainty as to other improvements, do you think the position would be different?—Then I think you would deprive the landlord of the control over his property which he now has, and it would indispose him to spend money on it in any way.

6136. I think you said that you knew of many cases of labourers who were willing to buy land and also cottages, I think you said, if they could have loans at low rates?—No, I did not quite say that, because I cannot speak of individual cases. I have given you a case in which a farm was sold in that way to labourers, and taken up readily by them, and I have no doubt in my own mind that in other parishes there are labourers who would be glad of the same opportunity, but I could not give individual cases.

6137. I wanted to ask in that connexion, as a possible alternative to the system of State loans which has its disadvantages, as you have pointed out in Ireland, whether you have considered the possibility of loan societies, such as have been carried out very successfully in Germany?—No, I have not sufficient acquaintance with those loan societies to speak of them.

Housing of Working Classes Act, 1890.

6138. Have you any information as to any board of guardians having tried to put in force the third part of the Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890, which gives very nearly the powers of the Labourers (Ireland) Act? There is no case of boards of guardians taking it up?—No such case has ever come under my notice.

Labourers (Ireland) Act.

6139. What is the real advantage of the Labourers (Ireland) Act as compared with the third part of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I believe that the Labourers (Ireland) Act gave very much larger powers than that as to obtaining land and as to building. I do not know precisely what the powers of the English boards of guardians would be to obtain money from the Government for that purpose.

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6140. You spoke of your experience of this farm you had in hand; what inference do you draw from that as to the possibility of agriculture paying a tenant farmer in the present conditions of land such as yours?—I think it may be safely assumed that any result that I was able to obtain through a bailiff, who was a very good bailiff, ought to be beaten by a tenant farmer who looked after his own affairs. That is all I would say as to that, of course if he was possessed of sufficient capital.

6141. Then even on an estate like yours where you have to make very great reductions, you think possibly on an arable farm under good conditions of course, leaving out the present year 1893, taking the average of years, it is still possible to make a reasonable profit?—A great deal depends upon what you mean by "reasonable." You must have a sufficient profit to attract persons into a business or it will not do. I suppose that it would be considered that a farmer ought to be able to make 10 per cent. on his capital. I doubt if he can do that.

enants' apital.

6142. The capital of farmers has very much decreased, has it not?—Very much, I believe.

6143. How many years rental on your rents do you suppose it represents now?—The capital of my tenants, do you mean?

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6144. Perhaps that was a question I ought not to put, but putting it generally, what do you say?—I am fortunate in my tenants, in one way I think that my Wiltshire tenants are men of capital, one or two of them are men of very large capital, and the question is not what rent they can afford to pay, but what rent they choose to pay.

Shooting rights.

6145. I understand that you generally let the shooting to the tenants, do you not? You have done so in a good many cases?—I have done so in a good many cases.

Tenants' capital.

6146. Where reductions were not made promptly such as you have made after the bad year of 1879, where heavy reductions were delayed for some years, you would expect the capital of the tenants to be seriously diminished, would you not?—It would of course be diminished to some extent if reductions were not made in time. But my experience of farming has convinced me that the rent bears a very small proportion to the total outgoings on the farm.

Low prices.

6147. (*Mr. Lambert.*) You attribute the depression of agriculture only to low prices?—Mainly to, not only to low prices.

Protection.

6148. Would you advocate any artificial increase of prices by placing a moderate duty on foreign produce?—Well, I came here to day rather to speak as an individual landowner than as a politician. I, as an individual landowner, would like such an attempt to be made, but I look upon it as impossible.

Co-operation.

6149. Do you attach any importance to co-operation amongst farmers for selling and buying their produce? I think you said you knew a sheep-dealer who had bought a farm with the proceeds of his profits?—I do not quite see how that bears upon co-operation. We have in that part of the country a few very large dealers, and the dealer in question is a man who sends many thousand sheep to fairs, which he purchases from different persons all over the country. It is a very large business, in which a large amount of capital is embarked.

6150. Do you think that money would be enabled to be saved by a small amount of co-operation by the purchaser being brought nearer to the producer?—I do not think that the class of business in which this dealer has made his money could be done by co-operation. Of course if it were possible, which I very much doubt, for farmers by co-operation to obtain the profits of the middleman, they would be better off than they are now.

Labourers' cottages.

6151. You spoke of giving to the labourers some permanent tenancy; do you think it is desirable to give them a permanent tenancy?—I do not think I advocated a permanent tenancy; what I advocated was an opportunity for labourers to become purchasers of land upon which they might build cottages, and practically become freeholders.

6152. What advantage would they derive from that?—I am not at all sure that their actual position in the end would be in many cases better than it is now. In some cases undoubtedly it would; it depends upon the man, but there is a very great desire on the part of the labouring class for something of the kind, I am quite sure.

6153. You would therefore remove all the artificial obstacles in the way of selling the land?—As far as I could.

6154. Why does the labourer attach any importance to being a freeholder or a small holder?—A desire for independence.

6155. Would you give the same facilities to tenant farmers?—Certainly, but as far as my experience goes, there is no desire among tenant farmers to buy land, least of all at the present moment.

Condition of tenant farmers.

6156. With adequate reductions of rent and average fertile seasons can the tenants prosper?—I am afraid that is a question which it is very difficult to answer. The worst of the present situation appears to me to be this, the steady declension of prices. I think years ago we thought we had seen the bottom, now nobody can see the bottom; that is the real difficulty.

6157. (*Chairman.*) I rather gather from you that two years ago if prices had remained as they then were, things had reached their level, and that the farmers rents had been reduced in proportion?—I forget exactly, but I think two or three years ago wheat went up as high as 48*s.* per quarter or even more, and many wheat growers, persons interested in the part of the country in which I am interested, were extremely hopeful of the future.

State loans for erection of cottages.

6158. (*Mr. Dalton.*) About the advances of money to labourers for the purpose of building dwelling-houses, do you think they should be made by the State or by the local authorities? There was, I think, a Bill this year which was read a second time in the House of Commons, which proposed that the local authorities should advance the money?—Yes, I had not actually considered that point. I do not quite see the advantage of the advances being made by the local authorities except that it might be more easy in that way to secure proper inspection; there is an advantage, I think, in that.

6159. (*Mr. Little.*) I should like to ask if you can give us the exact terms upon which money is now advanced by the State to boards of guardians in Ireland?—Yes, I have them now in my hand. I find that in October 1885 the Local Government Board for Ireland announced that for the future loans for the purposes of the Labourers Dwellings Acts would be made under the following conditions as regards terms of years and rates of interest. For loans repayable within a period not exceeding 35 years, 3¼ per cent. shall be charged. For loans repayable within a period not exceeding 40 years, 3½ per cent. shall be charged. For loans repayable within a period not exceeding 50 years, 3¾ per cent. shall be charged. The annuities covering principal and interest calculated upon the periods chosen for repayment of the loans would be as follows:—For a loan of 100*l.* repayable in 35 years at 3¼ per cent., 4*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.* per year. For a loan of 100*l.* repayable in 40 years at 3½ per cent., 4*l.* 13*s.* 8*d.* per year. For a loan of 100*l.* repayable in 50 years at 3¾ per cent., 4*l.* 9*s.* 2*d.* per year, showing a very large difference between those terms and the terms which I have quoted as those of the Lands Improvement Company.

Remedies for depression.

6160. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) With reference to the recommendation of an advance by Government to proprietors, have you any other suggestion to offer which in your opinion is at all likely to lessen the present depression as to the difficulties of both landlord and tenant?—I am afraid that nothing can really lessen the present depression except increased prices. I do not see my way to secure such an increase, I wish I did, compatible with the general advantage of the community. What I have suggested does not I am afraid go very far as a remedy for the present difficulties, but I think it would be an advantage.

Labourers' cottages.

6161. Might I ask what would be the cost in your part of the country of a couple of labourers' cottages, say two houses built together, if that is the general way in which you build them?—I think in my evidence in 1881 I put the cost of a pair of cottages—we generally build them in pairs—at 350*l.*, or something of that sort.

6162. The pair?—The pair.

6163. What accommodation have you in a house of that value?—You have a kitchen, that is to say, a living-room, a pantry, a back kitchen, with wood-house and privy, and three bedrooms.

State loans.

6164. (*Mr. Clay.*) You talk about the lending of money for the relief of landlords and tenants at a small interest, what is the interest you would put it at?—I have read the terms on which the Government now lend money to boards of guardians in Ireland for the erection of labourers' cottages, and I have also mentioned the terms on which the Government now lend money to landlords in Ireland for the erection of cottages or buildings or other permanent improvements.

6165. What sum per cent.?—I read the terms. The interest is as low in some cases as 3¼ per cent. to boards of guardians, and 3½ per cent. to landowners.

Fall in prices.

6166. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Have you made any calculation yourself, or your fellow landowners, as to how long the present low state of prices is likely to continue. I think you have assumed pessimistic views upon the subject, but you have not explained your reasons at all for doing so?—I know that when the price of wheat was at 45*s.*, as I have said, high authorities in this country suggested that it was likely to go up to 50*s.*, as I believe it did in some individual cases, and even to exceed that. Since then we have seen it down to, I suppose, 25*s.* or 26*s.*, or something of that kind. My views may be pessimist, but I am afraid that similar causes may even bring it lower.

6167. But you are not aware of any formal examination of the question by authorities who have studied it, and who have published their views upon the subject. There seems to have been very little discussion as to what the course of prices is likely to be?—The whole matter appears to be one of speculation; I say that with all deference to you, but there are so many factors in determining the price at which wheat can be sold in this country, that although some of them may disappear so as to lead to an increase in the price of wheat, others may come in which may lower it again.

6168. Of course that is only one article. There are several articles concerned in agriculture?—Yes, but when I speak of the fall of prices, what I mean so far as my experience goes, is the fall in the price of wheat and the fall in the price of stock—sheep and cattle.

6169. What I am anxious to get at is whether there is any discussion amongst people largely interested in agriculture as to the prospect of prices, and whether the good speculative opinion, as I may call it, leans to the side that prices are likely to continue low or rather expects some improvement?—Of course, if we had not an element of hope in the matter, I suppose anybody at any cost would get out of the land that he owns or leave the farm which he occupies. It is only the element of hope that keeps things going in agriculture at the present moment.

6170. One thing which is obvious is that at present we are in a state of depression generally, and it has often happened that you have a general fall in prices after a crisis like the Baring crisis, and then after a year or two there is a sort of improvement. I wish to ask whether you think the present depression in prices is not to some extent a part of that periodical fluctuation which will be followed by some improvement?—I think an improvement in trade and business generally would be of advantage to agriculture, and might lead to an increased price certainly *cæteris paribus*, but there might be some other cause operating abroad just as the extraordinary harvest in the United States operated a year or two ago, which would tend to lower prices.

6171. There has been no formal investigation of the subject from that point of view, as far as you know, by people who are competent to form an opinion?—Well, I believe you have investigated the subject yourself.

6172. I must say that I have not investigated the subject fully, and my reason for asking is because I want to know whether there are any discussions on the subject that you are acquainted with amongst people who are largely interested in agriculture?—No, I know of none that I could quote.

Rates.

6173. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) May I ask whether the rates upon land have increased in your district for the last 10 years?—Up to a certain time ago, in 1881, the poor rate had decidedly decreased, other rates had increased; but I should say that since that time the poundage rate, which is, I suppose, what you mean——

6174. Yes, exactly?—Has increased because of the enormous reduction in the rateable values.

6175. And therefore, of course, assessments have decreased in proportion with the rent?—Where the reductions of rent have been permanent, no doubt that has been so.

6176. May I ask whether, in your opinion, the incidence of rates upon land is unfair and unjust in relation to other property?—That is a large question. I certainly think that it is so. I speak, of course, from the point of view of a landowner.

Labourers' cottages.

6177. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You gave evidence in 1881 to the effect that you could build a pair of cottages complete, fencing and all that, for 350*l.*; do you think you could do it now at as low a price as that?—I think probably there would be an increase now, but I do not think that there would be a very large increase. There has been an increase in my experience in the wages of carpenters and masons, but I do not think it has been very large.

6178. The materials are about the same?—That estimate applied, if I remember aright, to cottages in Gloucestershire, where I could find practically nearly all my materials except slates and stone, or tiles for flooring.

6179. (*Lord Cobham.*) Would those cottages have fireplaces in all three bedrooms?—There would not be a fireplace in every bedroom; there would be a fireplace, I think, in two.

6180. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) We build rather cheaply in Gloucestershire, on account of the stone, generally speaking, being close at hand?—Certainly. Cottage building in that part of Wiltshire to which my evidence relates is very expensive, because we are 9 miles from a railway station, and we have neither stone nor timber, and everything has to be brought.

6181. As regards the cottages on your two estates in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, do you find that the tenants require you to build cottages on their farms?—Yes. The tenant must have a certain number of cottages for his yearly labourers. It is to the advantage both of the tenant and of the labourer that he should have. I think in Wiltshire the tenants have gone beyond that to some extent, and have insisted on cottages being let to them for other than yearly labourers; the labourers dislike that very much for obvious reasons, but tenants will not take farms without it. I have never let more than one cottage to every 100 acres to a tenant.

6182. That has been about the proportion?—Yes, in Wiltshire.

6183. You would not advocate a system which made the labourers entirely independent as regards the cottages?—I think there is a great advantage in the yearly hiring system for both persons, and where that is the case, as I have said, it is to the advantage of the labourer that the cottages should belong to the tenant, but I do not think that the tenants need have cottages beyond the yearly hiring.

Allotments.

6184. Do you find that the purely agricultural labourer, supposing he has an eighth of an acre or about that for his cottage garden, requires further allotments or asks for further allotments?—I find a difference in that respect between Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. I think the labourers in Wiltshire are very much more anxious for land than they are in Gloucestershire. When the family is large they would always desire some land, and would work it well too.

6185. Is it not the custom in Wiltshire for the tenant to give the labourers a certain portion of land for potato growing and so on?—No, I do not think that is commonly done; it is done often in Gloucestershire, but I do not think it is commonly done in Wiltshire.

6186. (*Lord Cobham.*) I think you said, taking one year with another, that your farm earned a rent and 5 per cent. interest on capital?—Yes.

6187. If that is so, do you think that an ordinary tenant farmer ought to be able to make the 10 per cent. that you spoke of?—I said that I consider my bailiff is a very good one.

Farming bailiff and tenant farmer compared.

6188. But still he is at a great disadvantage in marketing, is he not, in a market when it is known that a man is not fighting for his own hand but represents a rich man; is that not so?—That rather depends on the system of marketing. In my neighbourhood in Gloucestershire all the stock is sold by auction, and I do not think that that tells quite so much against a landlord occupying his land as the process of selling by bargain.

6189. Do you think that with your experience and capital you are pretty well on a par?—No, I do not think so, because a man must always look after his own affairs better than those of somebody else.

6190. You would not go so far as to say that if you have been able to earn 5 per cent., 10 per cent. ought to be earned by a tenant farmer?—I do not think my land could have been better farmed by a tenant farmer or more economically farmed than it has been, because, as I have said, I have a very good bailiff. I should hardly be prepared to say that a tenant farmer would make the difference between 5 per cent. and 10 per cent.

Land in hand.

6191. The rent that you fix upon your farm is that the rent at which you think you could let it in ordinary times?—Well, I should not let it at that rent.

6192. You could not get it?—I have not tried. I should prefer to keep it in hand, because there are other advantages; for instance, you have full control over your land. Part of this happens to be park land adjoining my house, which I have let to a tenant who rents the shooting also. There are matters of that kind which make it more convenient for me to keep the land in hand myself than to let it at so low a rent as that which I have named.

Rents.

6193. Taking the present range of rents in Wiltshire and your district, would you say that, apart from family and other changes, it is a living rent for the landowner and such as would enable him to do justice to the estate?—I suppose that an estate could hardly be found on which there are no family or other charges; but even putting those aside, I do not consider that the rents which I have named are living rents for the landlord.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. HUGH E. RAYNBIRD called and examined.

6194. (*Chairman.*) I believe you are agent to Lord Bolton's property in Hampshire?—I am.

6195. That consists of about 15,000 acres near Basingstoke, I believe?—Yes; in different parts of North Hampshire.

6196. How long have you been agent there?—Forty years.

Rent.

6197. Will you give to the Commission a statement showing the alterations in the rent of the property?—The reduction of rent on the poor land amounts to something like 50 per cent.

6198. What is the average rent now per acre?—It varies from 5*s.* to 25*s.* per acre. There is considerable variety of soil on the estate.

6199. Can you state what the aggregate rent is?—The annual rents received have varied from 9,000*l.* up to nearly 11,000*l.*, and now they are 7,400*l.* I have here a statement of each year's receipt of rent &c., which I will hand in (*handing in a statement*).

6200. This is a statement in each year of the rents received, the allowances made, and the arrears?—Yes. It shows that the allowances increase, and that the arrears increase also.

6201. Apparently 1877 was the highest point; then the rental received was 10,986*l.*, the allowances were 134*l.*, and the arrears 821*l.* In 1885 I see the rent was 8,000*l.*, the allowances were 303*l.*, and the arrears 2,174*l.*; for the year 1892 the rent received was 7,482*l.*, the allowances 962*l.*, and the arrears 4,227*l.*?—Yes; that is extracted from the estate books.

6202. (*Lord Cobham.*) I suppose in 1887 the arrears were mostly good, and in 1892 many of the arrears were bad?—No doubt of that.

Description of soil and cultivation.

6203. What is the land; is it good land?—The chief part of it is on the chalk. Some part of it is good land, and some very poor.

6204. A good deal of it is on the chalk?—Yes; the greater part of it is on the chalk. Part of the estate is on clay soil—on the London Clay.

6205. I suppose the heavy land grows wheat?—Yes.

6206. Anything else; or is it mainly wheat that is grown?—Wheat is the staple crop—wheat and clover.

6207. On the chalk what is it?—Clover, sainfoin, wheat and oats.

Reduction in rent.

6208. Do you consider the reductions of actual rent have been about 50 per cent.?—I consider the average abatement of rent on the bad land is 50 per cent. and on the good land 25 per cent. There is a further temporary abatement of from 10 to 20 per cent.

6209. Is that not just for the last year?—For the last few years.

6210. That temporary abatement has not yet been made permanent, I suppose?—No.

Particulars of farms.

6211. Now will you give us particulars of one or two farms, to illustrate the condition of the estate?—I will give you particulars of Blackland's Farm. It is at Old Basing. That is a farm on the clay. It is a farm containing 162 acres of arable land, 78 of pasture, and 4 of wood. It is a good farm. The elevation above the sea is from 210 feet to 250 feet. It is well watered by the River Lodden; the arable land is part strong loam and part gravelly loam. The meadows are partly irrigated.

6212. You need not go further into detail; what has been the result?—This farm was held in the same family for about two centuries; the rent paid from 1853 to 1886 was 230*l.*, the tenant paying the tithe of 72*l.*; in 1886, in consequence of the low prices of produce, he gave up by arrangement paying up the arrears, which then amounted to 301*l.*

6213. Then you relet the farm at 200*l.*?—The farm was not let, but was kept in hand for one year, and then let at a rental of 200*l.* at Michaelmas 1887, the tenant paying the tithe. In Michaelmas of 1892, the rent and arrears, in consequence of the low prices of produce, and injury to crops, and bad seasons, had accumulated to 649*l.*, and the tenancy was discontinued by arrangement. The tenant is now employed by Lord Bolton as a farm manager. The farm was relet from Michaelmas 1892, at a rental of 250*l.*, to a Devonshire farmer, the landlord paying the tithe. A grant of 20 per cent. has been made this year.

6214. Now take another case?—I will take the case of the Sherfield Farm. That is a farm on the clay. That is a very similar farm to the last one. The area is 290 acres; the elevation above sea-level 187 feet to 212 feet; it has a good water-supply; it is an excellent farm.

6215. Do you put in the statement of the various farms that has been laid before us?—Yes.

6216. Have there been many meetings held in Hampshire by the farmers of your district with reference to the depression?—There have been meetings. We had a large meeting at Winchester, and we have had small parish meetings in Old Basing.

6217. What conclusion do they come to?—I think a petition has been presented to the Commissioners, which I have before me now.

6218. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Is that the petition from Basing?—Yes.

Causes of depression.

6219. (*Chairman.*) What were the points alluded to?—It was resolved—"(1.) That Mr. Charles Hoare and "Mr. W. W. B. Beach, M.P. (having expressed them-"selves willing to act), be nominated as representa-"tives to give evidence before the Royal Commission "on Agriculture; (2.) That in the opinion of the com-"mittee of the Old Basing Association agricultural "depression is caused by the excessive cheapness of all "produce, the burdens of rates and taxation, and the "severe competition of foreign produce; and the re-"medies are (1.) an increased use of silver for currency "purposes, by agreement with the civilised powers of "the world, England's part being the introduction of "20*s.* and 10*s.* notes, based on silver, to be a legal "tender up to 10*l.*, and to be payable in silver at all "Post Office money offices in the United Kingdom, and "at the Bank of England in gold and silver at the "option of the Bank; (2.) The State to give greater "borrowing powers for redemption of tithe, land tax, "and other charges, including mortgages, by applying "some of the Post Office Savings' Bank deposits and "other funds for the purpose, loans being made at "3 per cent., with ½ per cent. sinking fund." Personally I should go farther than that, and advise State loans for estate improvements.

Remedies for depression.

6220. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Up to what amount was silver to be made legal tender in England—up to how much?—The resolutions say, "the introduction of 20*s.* and "10*s.* notes, based on silver, to be a legal tender up to "10*l.*"

6221. (*Chairman.*) Are those your own views or the views of the committee that you speak of?—My own views and the views of the committee. My views would extend beyond those.

6222. They extend beyond those, but they include all those?—Yes. The next resolution was, "Further re-"duction of rates for paupers, lunatics, roads, and "education, by increased contributions from the Con-"solidated Fund."

State loans for improvements.

6223. Now, you said your own views go beyond; in respect of State loans, what do you consider should be done?—I think there should be State loans, the interest on which should not exceed 3 per cent., with ½ per cent. sinking fund for improvements, such as the erection of cottages and farm buildings, planting, draining, water supply, road-making, and fencing.

6224. Is there much opportunity in your neighbourhood for the expenditure of money on improvements of these kinds?—I think so.

6225. Is that the case on Lord Bolton's estate; is there much room for improvement there?—There is room for a certain amount of improvement in that way.

6226. Has there been much done in the way of breaking up large farms into small ones?—Not very much.

6227. Would it be desirable that that should be done?—I do not think the large sheep farms are adapted for breaking up into small farms, but I think there is a slight demand for it at the present time. We are doing it in one or two cases.

6228. Would the advance of money by the State for improvements and for buildings facilitate it?—I think so; I think it would give employment to the labourer.

Extension of woodland.

6229. You spoke of planting; is there an opportunity for doing much in that direction?—I can put in a statement that I have prepared as regards the planting, if you would allow me to do so.

6230. If you please?—I have here a statement of the receipts and expenditure from 1854 to 1892, on 1,860 acres of woodland, that is, underwood and timber. I put that in as evidence of the income derived from the woodlands of North Hampshire. I believe an extension of the area of woodlands on the poor clays, and on the chalk soils, would be an advantage. There is a large number of skilled workmen employed in the woods during winter. They work on the farms during summer, and are a great help to the farmer. These 1,860 acres of woodland give employment during the winter to about 200 men.

6231. You think an additional amount of land in the district might be planted?—I think so. The return I make of the receipts and expenditure on this 1,860 acres of woodland from 1854 to 1892 shows receipts amounting to 53,151*l.* against an expenditure of 24,344*l.* I would ask to be allowed to contrast this income and outlay with land which has been held in hand for a considerable number of years which would show that a larger income can be made on this class of land from timber and underwood than can possibly be made from growing corn.

6232. What do you consider the initial cost per acre of planting?—From 3*l.* to 5*l.* perhaps, or 50*s.* to 5*l.* Lord Bolton has planted about 200 acres during the time I have been his agent.

6233. Has Lord Bolton done anything himself in that direction?—Yes, he has planted about 200 acres.

6234. (*Lord Cobham.*) What with?—Chiefly with larch, spruce, beech, ash, and oak. Some of the plantations are bringing in an income now that were planted during my 40 years.

State loans or redemption of tithe and land tax.

6235. (*Chairman.*) Then I understand you consider also that money might be lent by the State for the redemption of tithes and the redemption of the land tax?—Yes.

Rates.

6236. Then with regard to local rates, what have you got to recommend?—I think the rates press heavily on the land and that they should be borne more generally by the public, especially those with regard to roads. The people who use the roads, I think, should pay for them.

6237. Especially then with regard to the roads you think that greater relief should be given?—I think so.

Roads and bridges.

6238. What other recommendations have you to make?—I would recommend a further reduction of rates for paupers, lunatics, roads, and education by increased contributions from the Consolidated Fund and by the increased use of steam power for cultivation and transit of produce. For this it will be necessary that the roads and bridges should be made of sufficient strength to carry traction engines with safety. There should also be a better water supply. The roads and bridges I should recommend to be in charge of one authority. I think the road material should be consolidated by rolling and that the present barbarous system of wearing in the metal (to the serious loss of the farmers and others using the roads by damages to carriages, horses, and loss of time) should be discontinued. Further I should recommend the more practical education of the rising generation in the rural village schools and that the attendance of lads after they leave the village day school at the evening schools should be compulsory up to the age of 18 or 20 during

Education.

Mr. H. E. Raynbird.

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Relief works.

Diseased animals.

the winter evenings. Further I should recommend the employment of surplus labour in relief works, in such improvements as making better roads, better water supply, draining the wet valleys, and restoring the abandoned canals for the transit of goods. Further I should recommend that penalties should be enforced against the exposure of diseased animals at markets and fairs and on the public roads, and that wherever contagious disease appeared a sufficient "infected place" (not a circle or area) should be declared out of which no animal should be removed except for slaughter. This would isolate disease and would interfere to the least extent with trade.

6239. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are you in favour of preventing the importation of live stock from abroad?—I am not in favour of it.

6240. Nor the committee that you represent?—No.

Slaughter of cattle at port of debarkation.

6241. What is your opinion as to the slaughter at the port of debarkation?—I think that would interfere with trade.

6242. You are against the slaughter at the port of debarkation?—Yes.

Farms in hand.

6243. With regard to this estate generally, have there been many vacant farms?—There are about 2,500 or 2,600 acres in hand now.

6244. Is that the maximum quantity that you have had in hand?—Yes, that is the largest quantity.

6245. You find an increasing difficulty in getting tenants?—Yes.

6246. Is that owing to the want of capital or to the want of supply of farmers?—It is owing to the want of supply of farmers and because the business is not profitable.

6247. Do you wish to give any evidence as to your experience on the home farm?—I have here a statement of receipts and expenditure on lands in hand relinquished by the tenants from the year 1866 to 1892.

6248. Could you select a few years?—Previous to 1866 there was rarely if ever any land in hand; in 1866 there were 140 acres; they had increased in 1879 to 1,443; and from 1879 to 1892 they increased to 2,734 acres. That is about the quantity in hand at the present moment.

6249. Have you made out the profits or losses upon the farms in hand?—I have a return here from the estate books of the receipts and payments for those years. The summary is: receipts 62,864*l.* and payments 71,114*l.*, showing a very considerable loss.

6250. Of 9,000*l.*?—Nearly. Against that is the stock on hand, but there is no allowance for rent, or rates, or tithe.

6251. As a rule, I presume those farms came on to your hands in a very bad condition?—They were given up by arrangement, because the tenants were unable to keep them on, and they were certainly not in a good condition.

6252. You have had to bring them into good condition?—We have kept them in cultivation, and those that we have in hand are somewhat improved at the present time, but they have not been extravagantly farmed in any way.

6253. Has there been a home farm in addition to those farms thrown on hand?—No.

Causes of depression.

6254. Have you anything to add to your evidence that has been overlooked?—I might add this, that I consider low prices for a continued series of years is the cause of the depression, and that one remedy is the increase of the currency.

6255. You are against any protective system?—Yes.

Labour.

6256. Is the supply of labour well maintained in North Hampshire?—Fairly well.

6257. Is the quality as good as it was?—Some of the work is not done so well as it was in former years.

Wages.

6258. Now as to the wages, are they kept up?—Wages up to a certain point had increased, but there is a slight decrease now in the last few years.

6259. There has not been much material change?—Not a material change, but the tendency has been to increase—more particularly as regards the mechanics; there has been a considerable increase in the wages of farm mechanics.

Rural depopulation.

6260. Do you find that the young men leave the villages?—Very much.

6261. More than they did?—Yes.

6262. Do you think that your suggestion as to compulsory attendance at evening schools will counteract that, or the contrary?—I could hardly reply without consideration. It would make them better servants whether they were employed on the farms or elsewhere.

Technical education.

6263. Is your county council doing much for the practical education of labourers?—Yes, they are doing a good deal. They are sending lecturers out, and establishing classes all over the county.

6264. With good effects?—I should think the effect would be good, but it is slow work.

6265. Are those lectures well taken up by the labourers?—Some of them fairly well, but not to such a great extent as one could wish.

Slaughter of cattle at port of debarkation.

6266. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I think you said that the slaughter of all the cattle at the port of debarkation would interfere with trade?—I think so; that is my opinion.

6267. Would it interfere with the public sales?—Yes.

6268. And auctions?—Yes.

6269. Is it the general opinion of farmers in your district that they are opposed to the slaughter of cattle at the port of debarkation, or is that opinion limited to the auctioneers?—I should think that the auctioneers in addition to the traders were opposed to the slaughter.

6270. The auctioneers, but not the farmers?—Some of the farmers would be of one way of thinking, and others of the other; the majority would be in favour, I believe.

6271. Do you speak as an auctioneer or as a farmer?—I am both an auctioneer and a farmer.

6272. Have you found any inconvenience during the last 12 months with the trade?—Not to our individual trade.

6273. Are you aware that this very thing, this slaughter of all cattle at the port of debarkation, has been in force during those 12 months?—No, I have paid very little attention to it, I am sorry to say.

6274. Then, if you had been aware of that fact, it probably would have altered your opinion?—I think not.

6275. Why, if there has been no inconvenience arising?—I believe that the slaughter of animals at the port would interfere with the trade and with the public generally. I think it would be an advantage to the public to have as little embarrassment placed on a trade as possible.

6276. Of course you are aware that these restrictions are imposed in order to prevent the importation of disease?—Yes, but I believe that disease could be prevented in other ways.

6277. What other modes would you suggest?—If they were carefully inspected that should be sufficient.

6278. That is your opinion?—Yes.

6279. You are not aware that in spite of all kinds of careful inspection the terrible importations of foot-and-mouth disease occurred under the system you advocate; you are not aware of that?—I am quite aware of the existence of foot-and-mouth disease; I have been aware of it all my lifetime.

6280. What I am asking you is this: Are you aware that when the last great importations of foot-and-mouth disease occurred, which committed so much havoc in the country, those importations occurred under the very system of inspection which you say is sufficient to prevent it; are you aware of that?—I am living inland, and that is a matter that I have not given a great amount of attention to.

Increase of currency.

6281. I think, in reference to the chief cause of agricultural depression, namely, the fall in prices, one remedy that you suggest would be an expansion of the currency?—Yes.

6282. Have you studied that question carefully?—I do not think I have studied it sufficiently to give evidence upon it. I have a statement that I should be very glad to read.

6283. A statement of your own?—Yes.

6284. If you have not studied it carefully I will not press you upon it?—I have read most of the speeches and most of the articles on the subject.

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6285. Do you wish to read the statement ?—I have no desire to press my opinions on the Commissioners at all.

6286. (*Lord Cobham.*) Perhaps you might send it to Mr. Chaplin, and then we could avail ourselves of his opinion as to putting it in ?—I should be very glad to send it to Mr. Chaplin.

6287. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You say you have not studied it carefully ?—I have read the speeches and articles, but I am sure I couldnot give evidence on so intricate a subject, and I should not venture to do so.

Sub-division of farms.

6288. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You said in the beginning of your evidence that you think it would be very desirable if some of the large farms were made into smaller ones. Take the farms in Hampshire and Wiltshire, those large farms which are generally called sheep farms; do you think that can be done ?—Not to any great extent.

6289. I was going to say with economy ?—You mistook me if you understood me to say that it was desirable. I do not think it would be possible to carry it out to any great extent.

6290. I understood you to say that it was possible ?—No, not to any great extent.

6291. If money could be borrowed at a low rate to do it with ?—Not to any great extent—not on the sheep farms; on the best farms in the county perhaps it might be done.

6292. With reference to large farms, there must be a certain acreage for there to be an economy of labour and other economies in farming to make them pay, would you not say that ?—I think that it would be very difficult to make small holdings out of the poor Hampshire land, because the return is so small and the expense of providing the necessary equipment is so great in comparison.

Extension of woodland.

6293. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) You advocate planting poor land in Hampshire with wood, I think ?—Yes, from my experience, I do.

6294. You think that the profit on that compares favourably with that on arable land ?—It does so compare with the returns from similar land during the low prices.

6295. Land of the same kind ?—Yes.

6296. I think you said that the initial cost of planting wood land was 50*s*. an acre ?—From 50*s*. to 5*l*.

6297. Would that include preparing the lands and getting the young trees ?—We do it in a rough and ready kind of way. We grow our own trees and plough them in.

6298. May I ask what kind of wood you would plant ?—Larch, beech, oak, ash, and spruce.

6299. Have you a sale for hop-poles in your district ?—Yes.

6300. Is that the reason why you advocate planting the land ?—One reason.

6301. Because there is a sale for hop-poles ?—There is a sale for hop-poles and underwood generally; it is quite a business in our part of the world.

6302. That would not apply to other districts where there was no sale for hop-poles ?—We have a sale for other things as well as hop-poles.

6303. What other things may I ask ?—Crate rods for potteries, hurdles, hoops; there are a great number of articles made in the woods, it is quite an industry. At present prices timber and underwood are preferable to corn growing on the poor chalks and clays of North Hampshire. Besides, an extension of the woods would add to the future value of the land for residential and sporting purposes.

Increase of currency.

6304. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Was the resolution of your association regarding currency in favour of increasing the use of silver throughout the world by international agreement and in favour of issuing notes based on silver to be legal tender in this country up to a limit of 10*l*. passed after much debate; was that resolution debated ?—There was a certain amount of debate.

6305. Do you agree with it yourself ?—Yes.

6306. But your own views go a little further I understand ?—With regard to the State loans.

6307. You agree with the association about the currency ?—Yes.

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6308. Was there any discussion of the question as to how much more silver could be used throughout the world if this international agreement was to be come to ?—I think not.

6309. No discussion ?—No, I think not.

6310. You do not know whether more silver could be used or not ?—I am not competent to give a reply.

State loans for redemption of tithe and land tax.

6311. (*Mr. Little.*) You suggest facilities being given for the redemption of tithe. Have you considered, and are you prepared to suggest any practical scheme for the redemption of tithe ?—No, I am not.

6312. You are not ?—No.

6313. Perhaps you recognise the difficulty of securing to the tithe-owner what he has now, and of taking from the landowner no more than he pays now; you do not think the tithepayer could afford to pay a higher tithe than he pays now, even with the view of the ultimate redemption of the tithe—he could not pay more than he does now, could he ?—If he had the tithe redeemed after a certain time.

6314. You think he would be prepared pay a higher tithe ?—I think he pays too much now according to his ability, and therefore I advocate State loans at 3 per cent. and half per cent. sinking fund for the redemption of tithe, land tax, and mortgages.

6315. If you have not got a scheme it is no use pursuing it ?—No, I have not got a scheme.

6316. The same with regard to the land tax. Are you acquainted with the terms upon which the land tax can be redeemed now ?—I am not.

6317. You know there is power to redeem ?—Yes, I am quite aware of that, but I do not know the terms.

6318. But you think money might be lent to landowners with the object of redeeming the land tax ?—Yes.

Redemption of mortgages.

6319. With regard to the mortgages, would you ask the State to lend money for the redemption of mortgages ?—I think so.

6320. You think the State could afford to lend money at a cheaper rate than an individual ?—The State could make a profit, I believe, and it would be a saving to the individual.

Roads and bridges.

6321. Then you say that the roads and the bridges should be in the charge of one authority. May I ask what you mean; is it that all the roads and bridges in a county should be under one executive board ?—I mean should be in the charge of one authority, either a local one or the county authority. I think there is a waste from there being two authorities.

6322. You mean the parochial system—the district system and the county main roads ?—Yes, there are two systems now.

6323. Have you highway districts ?—Yes.

6324. Then you have the main roads maintained by the county ?—Yes.

6325. Does the county call upon the districts to maintain them ?—Yes, the county makes a bargain with the districts.

6326. Do the districts maintain the bridges, or does the county ?—The county maintains the main bridges.

6327. The county maintains the county bridges ?—Yes.

6328. And the district maintains the district bridges ?—Yes.

Extension of woodlands.

6329. You spoke of the planting of woods. Is not one of the benefits that you expect from the extension of woodlands the improvements of the condition of the labourers ?—Yes.

6330. I do not want to go into the question of Mr. Bear's report to the Labour Commission, but in it he speaks of the great advantages of woodland country to the labourers ?—Yes, to the labourer and the farmer too.

6331. By giving work in the slack season of the year ?—Yes.

6332. Perhaps you are acquainted with Cobbet's Rural Rides; he makes the very same remark about the woodland districts ?—Yes.

State loans for redemption of land tax.

6333. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What benefit do you think would result if the State were to lend money for redeeming the land tax ? At present the land tax is owing by the owner to the State; what is the advantage of substituting another debt to the State for it?—The idea in my mind would be that the charge would be less, and that the charge would be extinguished after a certain number of years.

6334. It would come to this then, that you would wish it to be redeemable by instalments, instead of being redeemable in a lump sum?—Yes, by the payment of 3 per cent. and ½ per cent. sinking fund.

Redemption of mortgages.

6335. If the State were to lend money for mortgages, would it not practically put itself in the position of a landowner in the course of time; it would have to foreclose if it did not get its money? Would that not be very awkward?—I apprehend the position would be just the same.

6336. If an estate were heavily mortgaged, and the State advanced the money for paying off those mortgages, the State might be very soon placed in the position of having to foreclose and become the landowner?—Yes.

6337. Would that not be very awkward?—It would be in the same position as——

6338. The ordinary mortgagee would be?—Yes.

6339. It would be a very awkward position for the State to assume, would it not?—I do not see it in that light.

Rates.

6340. You consider that the depression in agriculture is partly caused by the rates, I think you said?—The great depression in agriculture, I believe, to be caused by the continued low prices.

6341. I think you said it was partly due to the rates?—The rates are a heavy charge.

6342. Have they not gone down in Hampshire?—They are reduced lately, they are lower.

6343. Lower now than they used to be?—Yes.

6344. In consequence of the Imperial subventions?—Yes.

Highway rates.

6345. Do you suggest that the State should pay a larger amount than it does at present towards the roads?—Yes.

6346. Does it not in Hampshire pay the whole cost of the main roads practically?—I believe so.

6347. Then it would be that you think it should pay for the country lanes, as well as the main roads?—I believe that those who use the roads should pay for them.

6348. The lanes, the country lanes?—Yes; the public use them.

6349. The public already pay for the main roads?—Yes.

Farms in hand.

6350. In the farms that you have in hand, you say you made no rent, I think?—No rent.

6351. And not enough even to pay the rates?—No.

6352. Or to pay any interest at all on the working capital?—No.

6353. (*Lord Cobham.*) Have you got the value of the stock left on the farm?—No; it would be considerable.

6354. Would it cover the loss?—Hardly; it would, the greater part of it.

6355. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Did you have them for any long period?—It extends over a period of from 1866 to 1892.

6356. The farms in hand?—Yes; these are farms that came in hand from time to time, because it was impossible to find tenants for them.

6357. Then if a tenant had been found for them he would probably have been put into a very disastrous position?—It is quite possible he would—in all probability he would.

6358. I mean even if he had paid no rent on these particular farms?—Yes.

6359. Were they very bad ones?—They were poor farms.

Remedies for depression.

6360. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What is your main remedy for agricultural depression?—I have already stated that to the Commission, I believe.

6361. (*Lord Cobham.*) I understood you to say an increase of the currency?—An increase of the currency and State loans.

6362. (*Mr. Lambert.*) And the increase of the currency you have not studied much?—Not much; no more than reading the speeches and articles which have appeared in the papers.

6363. What per-centage should you say agricultural produce has decreased in the last 10 years?—That is a question that I should require to consider before answering if I might be allowed to have time to do it.

6364. Could you give us a rough estimate?—The decline in produce.

6365. The decline in prices of agricultural produce?—Generally?

6366. Generally?—It is a question that it is impossible to answer without data to go upon.

Fall in prices.

6367. You said just now that you attributed the agricultural depression to the fall in prices?—The fall in prices has been general in most articles of farm produce, and more especially in wheat.

6368. But you do not know how much they have decreased?—I should not wish to commit myself to any answer of that kind without consideration.

Particulars of farms.

6369. Now referring to the Blacklands Farm; for what reason did the first tenant leave after he and his family had been there for 200 years?—He was unable to pay his way.

6370. What is his present employment?—He is a very old man; I do not think he is employed upon anything; he is not engaged upon any kind of work.

6371. Is he in poor circumstances?—Very.

6372. Was the second tenant a fairly industrious man?—Very; he is in my employ at the present time.

6373. As bailiff?—Yes; he was the son-in-law of the first tenant.

6374. The farm was let in 1886 at 30*l.* a year less than the old tenant paid?—Yes.

6375. Did you give the old tenant an opportunity of continuing at that rent?—At the reduced rent?

6376. Yes?—He would not keep on the farm.

6377. He would not keep on the farm, even at that rent?—No.

6378. But you let it at 200*l.* a year?—Yes, it was to his son-in-law.

6379. Who was a very industrious man?—Yes.

6380. And who, in six years, got 649*l.* in arrears?—Yes.

6381. To what do you attribute his getting into arrears?—To low prices and bad seasons in his case; he lost his hay crop once or twice, I think.

6382. He was not able, I presume, to pay so much rent?—He was not in a position to pay so much rent.

6383. (*Lord Cobham.*) Was he a good farmer?—A very fair farmer.

6384. (*Lord Vernon.*) If he had had his whole rent back he would nevertheless have failed?—He could not have gone on.

6385. Practically he would not have been able to get on with no rent?—That is so.

6386. (*Mr. Lambert.*) I cannot admit that. Then you have now let the farm at 250*l.* a year?—Yes.

6387. Had you many applications for it?—We had not more than one or two applications.

6388. But you have had to give back a reduction of 20 per cent.?—This last year.

6389. Which means 50*l.*?—Yes.

6390. Do you consider that the farm is rented at more than it is worth now, when it is rented at 250*l.*?—The 20 per cent. was given back on account of the bad season, the dry season.

6391. Why do you think that this Devonshire farmer can pay 250*l.* a year if the other, an industrious man, could not pay 100*l.* a year?—That is a matter for the tenant's consideration. We hope for better prices. Another reason is that the Devonshire man farms upon a different system; he goes upon selling milk and butter, and the other tenant went upon the plan of growing corn. That is the reason we hoped he would succeed.

6392. I understood you to say that you made no profit on your own farms that you had in hand?—We made no profit on our own farms on an average.

6393. Do you expect, as a practical man, that this Devonshire farmer will be able to pay 250*l.* a year?—

This Blacklands Farm is of a very different character to the land I have in hand.

6394. Judging from your experience with the other man, who was an industrious man, but was not able to pay 100*l.* a year, do you think this Devonshire man can pay 250*l.* a year?—If the prices keep as they are, and if he depends upon corn, I do not think he can. It is possible that if he is a good manager of stock he may do it—he will not make any large amount of income from it.

6395. The 20 per cent. that you have given back he gets no advantage of in a lowering of his assessment?—No, I think not; he would in the income tax assessment.

6396. Do you think it would be advisable instead of this temporary abatement to give him a permanent abatement?—I think not in the interests of the landlord.

6397. But presuming you study the interest of the tenants?—I am employed by the landlord.

6398. So you do not study the interests of the tenants?—I think the landlord does.

6399. But in this case you have not?—I believe I have.

6400. I said, would it not be to the interest of the tenant to have this a permanent abatement rather than these temporary and uncertain abatements?—This abatement was made on account of the unusual loss he suffered from the dry season.

6401. But yet for all that you are letting this farm at practically 50*l.* a year more than the other tenant, who was an industrious man, was able to pay?—We are looking for better things, and the incoming tenant is no doubt looking for better things.

6402. So you are living on hopes and not on practical results?—The result was in the future; it could not be seen.

Increase of currency.

6403–4. (*Mr. Everett.*) I understand you in regard to the currency to hold the opinion, and that others in Hampshire hold it with you, that an increase of money raises prices, and a diminution lowers them; that is the general view that you take on the currency question?—Yes.

6405. Is it therefore fair to suppose that the closing of mints generally against one of the two precious metals is calculated by reducing the quantity of money to raise its value and so to force down prices?—You are asking me a question upon which I do not consider myself qualified to give evidence.

6406. You can see, I have no doubt, that the closing of mints against one of the two precious metals is an influence to diminish the quantity of the metal?—To diminish the currency.

6406*a*. And as a diminution of the quantity of money lowers prices that therefore is an influence to lower prices generally?—Yes.

6407. You would assent to that?—I would assent to the fact that the contraction of the currency would lower prices.

Extension of woodlands.

6408. (*Mr. Elton.*) About the woodland district. I suppose it is a very great advantage to the labourer in the woodland district to have wood very cheap?—Yes.

6409. As fuel?—Yes.

6410. He is allowed it very cheap, I suppose?—Yes, you see they get the dead wood which is a great advantage to them.

6411. They can buy 100 faggots very cheap?—Yes, the men are in the woods working.

6412. If they make it themselves what do they pay?—They get the dead wood for nothing; it is a perquisite.

6413. When there is a timber sale they will buy the tops and lops, I suppose?—Yes, sometimes.

6414. The timber men let them have them very cheap?—Of course they get all they possibly can for them. There is this advantage in working in the woods, that they get their fuel cheaper.

6415. I asked you a special question: are they not able to buy a hundred faggots for their cottage very cheaply indeed?—The price of firewood is moderate because there is an abundance.

6416. How much would it be if they make their faggots themselves?—The faggots vary so much in their size and in what they really are.

6417. In every village I suppose they have a customary size?—Yes.

6418. Take a stack of firewood enough to last half a year?—A stack of firewood is about 9*s.* or 10*s.* at the present prices.

6419. If he makes it himself it would be very much less?—It would make it about half-a-crown less.

6420. It is a distinct advantage to the labourer in your district that he has not to buy coal?—Yes, there is no doubt that the working in the woods is a distinct advantage to the labourer on account of the cheap fuel.

6421. (*Lord Cobham.*) Have you anything further to add?—I think not.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. J. Stratton.

Mr. James Stratton called and examined.

6422. (*Lord Cobham.*) You live at Chilcombe?—Yes, close to Winchester.

6423. How far from Winchester?—Two miles.

Description of farm in Hampshire and Wiltshire.

6424. And you rent about 5,500 acres?—Yes, about 3,500 in Hampshire and 2,000 in Wiltshire.

6425. Is that one take?—No. There are something like 10 holdings. Some of the farms are up to 1,100 acres, and some are small farms.

6426. Are the holdings scattered, or fairly consolidated?—Somewhat scattered; about 2,000 acres are around Winchester under the Dean and Chapter of Winchester Cathedral, 500 or 600 acres on the Tichborne estate, and 2,000 in Wiltshire in the Pewsey Vale.

6427. Is the whole of this great farm under your sole management?—Yes, I pay rent for the whole.

6428. And manage it?—Yes, but I have sons who are a great assistance to me.

6429. You are the tenant farmer of 5,500 acres?—Yes, I am.

6430. Would you describe the character of the land?—The Wiltshire land is heavy, of a clayey character; it is wheat, bean, and barley land, and it also runs up on the Down. Those 2,000 acres are taken on lease at a rent of 1,100*l.* a year tithe free.

6431. What lease do you hold under?—A seven years' lease.

6432. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Could you give us the proportion of the clay and the Down—I mean roughly?—It is about 700 of Down, and the rest is arable with the exception of 100. There is 100 vale pasture, and the rest is vale arable.

6433. (*Lord Cobham.*) What is the total acreage?—2,000 acres.

6434. Then the other properties?—The other property is all pretty much typical Hampshire land. It is all on the chalk. It is pretty good sheep land; some of it grows wheat very well, and some is very poor.

6435. That will be 3,500 acres?—Yes.

6436. At what rent do you hold that?—At various rents.

6437. What is the rent of the whole?—The rent for the whole holdings I have, the 5,500 acres, averages 11*s.* per acre tithe free.

6438. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) The whole 5,500?—Yes, and Hampshire is an average of it as to price.

6439. (*Lord Cobham.*) Is that held from year to year?—Most of it from one to two years holding.

6440. When did you enter upon those?—I entered upon most of the Hampshire land in 1866.

6441. And the rest?—I entered upon the Wiltshire land in 1888. I may say that I took one of these Hampshire farms this Michaelmas. It is a property 4 miles from Winchester. The late owner was

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offered 24,000*l.* for it about 20 years ago; he mortgaged it and died, the mortgagees foreclosed, but could not let it, and asked me to take it. The tithe is 212*l.* a year. It is in a very fair state of cultivation, and they let it to me at a nominal rent of 1*l.* a year. It is 640 acres of Hampshire land, which I have taken at 1*l.* a year, the owner paying the tithe and being responsible for repairs.

6442. (*Mr. Giffen.*) What is the tithe, did you say?—The tithe is 212*l.*

6443. (*Lord Cobham.*) Is that not for a limited time?—Yes, for one year.

6444. But the understanding is that it is for a year at all events?—Yes, it was in the hands of Rawlence and Squarey, who advertised it and tried to let it. They are farming the adjoining parish for the landlord, and they asked me to take this farm at a rent. I told them I would give them a mere nominal rent. I met them, and they said they must get some rent. I said I think your alternative will be to farm it at a loss, as you do, I fear, in the adjoining parish, or to let me find the capital and farm it. After consideration and consultation with the owner, they wrote asking me to take it; it had been advertised for months.

6445. Is it in a very bad condition?—No, rather above the average. It is now carrying 360 ewes, and 100 head of cattle.

6446. How near to Winchester is it?—Four miles.

Reduction of rent.

6447. Can you tell us the variations in rent that have occurred since you entered upon the farm?—I cannot tell you exactly that.

6448. Approximately?—Speaking generally of Hampshire, I may safely say that the corn and sheep farms have come down about 50 per cent.

6449. That would be a typical Hampshire farm, would it?—Yes.

6450. About 50 per cent.?—Yes, and the poor farms of Hampshire do not find a tenant—as Mr. Raynbird said, the owners farm them at a loss.

6451. Do you take these 5,500 acres as very fairly representative of Hampshire and Wiltshire land?—Yes.

6452. Neither better nor worse?—Yes. One of these Hampshire farms is let at about a third of the rent that it was let for 20 years ago. My brother paid 1,600*l.* a year 20 years ago, and I pay 600*l.*

Low prices.

6453. Do you wish to give us any information as to the results of your extensive farming?—The chief losses that I have sustained have been from the depreciation in the value of my farming stock. Cattle and sheep are now about 30 per cent. lower than they were four or five years ago, and if my affairs are valued up in that way I should be a considerable loser. The depreciation in the value of stock is the chief way in which I have lost.

6454. How many years ago is it since that depreciation set in?—It has been going to the bad ever since 1879. We have had no redeeming season since 1879.

6455. You do not mean the value of live stock?—No, that has been up and down. I mean the farmers have not done well; they have not held their own.

6456. How do you manage these 5,500 acres?—I have working bailiffs on them. I keep a great deal of cattle, and an immense deal of land that I took as arable is now pasture. I keep stock upon it, and so keep down the labour expenses.

Laying down of permanent pasture.

6457. How has it been turned into pasture?—It is laid down to permanent pasture.

6458. Have you done that yourself?—Yes.

6459. Have you done it without agreement with the landowner?—With regard to my land near Winchester I laid some of it down under the Agricultural Holdings Act, and last Michaelmas came to a settlement, as I had a fresh take at a fresh rent. I was paid under the Agricultural Holdings Act for this land. It was left to the valuers, and they settled it without any dispute.

6460. Do you consider yourself well protected by the provisions of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I consider that I benefited the land very much more than I got compensated.

6461–2. Do you think that the Act should be altered so as to meet such a case?—No, I do not say that.

Dairying.

6463. You are also engaged in dairying, I believe?—Yes, I send milk to London.

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6464. Will you give us your experience of dairy farm operations?—I think that is the best branch of my business. I dairy 200 cows and rear all the stock. I keep the young stock upon the poor lands I have laid down to grass, and keep the dairy cows on the better land at home.

6465. You send the milk to London?—Yes.

6466. You do not make butter or cheese?—No.

Railway rates.

6467. You find it pays best to send the milk straight to London?—It is much better to sell the milk than to make cheese or butter. Now the railway rates come in; the railway company take about an eighth of the value of my milk as carriage for 60 miles, which I think is very exorbitant.

6468. Have they not come down?—They have not come down, and the railway rates are unequal. From Midhurst to London is 3*d.* less upon 18 gallons than from Winchester to London, and the distance is the same.

6469. Winchester not being a competitive point, I suppose?—Yes, I think so.

Sheep breeding.

6470. But on the whole year dairying is more profitable than any other farm operation?—It is the best thing I do, I think. I breed sheep very largely, and that is very speculative. Those farmers who this year had to sell their lambs early sold at a terrible loss, but those who happened to have thunderstorms, or any other accidental circumstance, that enabled them to keep them on to the autumn, sold them right well; just that accident made the difference between a good profit or a great loss.

Corn growing.

6471. With regard to your corn-growing, what have you to say about that?—I do not grow corn to anything like the extent I used to do. I do not grow corn so frequently. It is difficult to say whether it is profitable or not. You cannot keep these cows without growing a lot of corn, because you want straw for wintering them. My cows are kept on oat, straw, and roots, so I must grow straw for their sake. To keep cattle it is well to have a considerable proportion of arable.

6472. Do you consume the whole of the straw you grow upon the farm?—Yes, generally; and of course enormous sums are spent for cake and such like.

6473. I presume you also consume the hay?—I sell the hay; I seldom consume hay.

6474. Do you sell it at Winchester?—Sometimes there—sometimes at Aldershot. I consider hay generally much the most expensive food you can use.

6475. Aldershot, I presume, is a first-rate market?—No, it is not very high priced there, and they are very capricious in their tastes; sometimes they like what I should call not very good hay; sometimes they will have the best.

Freedom of sale.

6476. Would you give tenant farmers as a rule perfect freedom to sell off both hay and straw?—Certainly; let them sell anything. I never hear of any restriction now.

6477. You do not hear of any?—No, I never hear of any.

6478. Although there may be restrictions in the covenants they are not enforced?—They are quite disregarded.

Reduction of rents.

6479. With regard to the subject of rents, have you any opinion to lay before the Commission?—I think that rents were very much too high some time ago—they were driven up by amateur farmers and one thing and the other. There was a sort of land hunger, and rents got higher than was reasonable. They are now gradually getting down, but in my opinion they will still have to come down as we tenant farmers will not go on occupying land and investing capital in it unless we can get something like a fair return. Things are not satisfactory now with us at the present rents, and the only thing we can see to alter is the rent.

6480. Do you think that a reduction of 50 per cent. upon typical Hampshire land is not sufficient?—It is not sufficient because the difference in the value of our wheat crop comes to that money, and there is a fall in other things too, but a still futher reduction of some 25 per cent. will have to be granted. Is land worth anything? is the common remark among farmers.

Position of landowners in Hampshire.

6481. That would mean, would it not, that a great deal of land would have to be rented so low as to prevent the landowners making anything like permanent improvements upon it?—It seems to me

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like the ruin of the pure agricultural landlord. Many estates in Hampshire have not paid working expenses for a long time, and then the tenants are being ruined. I am sure the Tichborne estate, on which I have been a tenant for 20 years, has not paid working expenses, and as for anything spent in the way of improvement is money lost and there is very little of it done.

6482. Are there many cases that you know of where the landowner takes the land in his own hands and lets the buildings and fences go down and the land is just used as a cattle or sheep run?—Yes, I could mention several estates that are served in that way.

6483. The landlord probably gets in this way rather more out of it than a tenant can afford to pay?—He cannot let it, and then his object is to save expenses, so he lays it down to grass and stops nearly all the labour. A great deal of Hampshire is very poor, and even in the best times there were very few cases where the tenants did well.

Depression in Hampshire.

6484. Would you regard Hampshire as somewhat exceptional in the depression that has overtaken the country?—Do I think the depression exceptionally great in Hampshire?

6485. Yes?—But perhaps Essex has suffered as badly.

6486. I mean taking the southern and midland counties generally?—Yes. A great deal of Hampshire land is not worth occupying at a penny an acre; it is now worth nothing at all.

Tithe and taxes.

6487. (*Mr. Everett.*) That is if the tenant pays the tithes and rates?—The assessment would not be very high where the rent is nothing. In the case of the farm that I have taken at a pound a year the assessment committee have put the gross rateable value at 100*l.* and the net rateable value at 90*l.*

6488. Tithe, I suppose, is paid on that land still?—There will be some alteration with regard to the tithe. I do not know what will be done, but the owner will not pay 212*l.* I believe he might avail himself of some fresh Act. I think the present local taxation upon land is very unfair.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow morning at 12 o'clock.

Thirteenth Day.

Friday, 22nd December 1893.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

VISCOUNT COBHAM.
The Right Hon. BARON VERNON.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
WALTER HUME LONG, Esq., M.P.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
FREEMAN THOMAS, Esq. } *Secretaries*

Mr. JAMES STRATTON recalled and further examined.

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Local taxation.

6489. (*Lord Cobham.*) We have dealt with rents, and we will now take the second point on which you wish to be examined. Have you got any suggestions to make to the Commission with regard to local taxation and its incidence?—I think it is a crying shame that land should bear the same extraordinary taxation now that it used to bear when it had the privilege of protection. It is generally felt among all farmers that as it bears now no exceptional advantages, it ought not to have those exceptional hardships. The local taxation upon land is altogether out of proportion to the value of the land, and to the value of the profit of the people who occupy it.

6490. Have you any specific suggestion to make to correct that anomaly?—That personal property should share it in the same proportion as real property does, that everybody should pay towards these taxes according to their ability. That especially refers to the poor rate. With regard to the roads, such a tax as the wheel tax was the most fair that could be imagined.

6491. Would you alter the local collection and management of rates?—I do not find any fault with the present collection, it is only the incidence of taxation.

Corn returns.

6492. Now with regard to corn returns, I believe you wish to say something upon them?—I think they act very unfairly, inasmuch as the tail corn as a rule is not sold at all, and the best corn is sold again and again. I have known several instances where barley has been returned at 8*s.* more than the farmer has taken. That is very unfair in relation to the tithe.

6493. Do you think that that hits you specially in Hampshire and Wiltshire?—No, I do not see that it does. There have been some glaring instances of what I say in Winchester market, but there is no reason why they should be more common there than at other places.

6494. Would you say that your corn produce is not up to the average produced in other places?—No, I do not think our barley is up to the average.

6495. Barley is not?—No, but our wheat is.

Tithe.

6496. You would advocate an alteration of the law in fact?—I think the seller, the farmer who first sells, should make the return. That would obviate the evil. I think that is the only hardship the tithe-owner can plead—that the returns are grossly unfair. I think that if the returns were fair he would have no complaint. He may as well complain about his acres being less than he wished, or about their being poorer than he wished they were, as that there was this tax of tithe on it, which has been there from time immemorial.

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6497. (*Mr. Long.*) The tithepayer you mean, not the tithe-owner?—I look upon that as the same. I think the tithe-owner has no cause to complain as long as the corn returns are fair.

6498. (*Lord Cobham.*) That would of course result in considerable diminution of the already reduced amount of the tithe?—A very great diminution. If a man buys land with tithe on it, and then complains that it is there, I think he may just as well complain that the land is poor instead of being good, or that the estate is smaller than he wished it was. Of course, that is only my personal view of it.

Railway rates.

6499. Now as to railway rates, which is your next point, do you consider that there is an undue preference there?—There is an undue preference given to foreign goods. Then the rates are too high, especially upon milk; I think it is monstrous that the railway company should take an eighth of the gross value of my milk.

6500. Is your milk sent up by passenger train generally?—Yes. It is a very good service.

6501. I suppose that you would allow that they are entitled to charge for sending up the milk by passenger service?—Yes. Without passenger service the milk trade would stop altogether when it is beyond 30 miles from London; it would be too slow.

6502. Those rates are now fixed, are they not?—They will not alter them.

6503. Formerly they could charge what they pleased? —I think so.

6504. Have you found no relief from that?—No. I have been complaining that at Winchester they charge 3*d.* more on an 18-gallon churn to London than they do from Midhurst, which is the same distance, and I can get no redress.

6505. (*Mr. Little.*) Is it the same company?—I do not think Midhurst is the same line; I am not quite sure.

6506. There are two lines to London, I think?—That answers it—that is the reason I suppose. I have been refusing to pay this 3*d.*; I have been holding it back so that the thing may be brought to an issue.

6507. (*Chairman.*) Have you refused to pay the extra charge since the beginning of the year?—Yes. Their reply to me is that since it is the same that I paid last year, they insist upon my paying that. I do not consider that a sufficiently good argument. As I have paid it for the last two or three years they think it a sufficient reason why I should continue to pay it, but I have only lately found out that there is a difference between it and the Midhurst rate, and as soon as I did find it out I stopped it. I expect I shall get the worst of it.

6508. Has a large sum accumulated in that way?—No; about 15*l.*, I think. I pay them something like 500*l.* a year for the carriage of milk.

6509. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are you aware that with regard to foreign produce preferential rates are illegal?—I cannot give chapter and verse, but there is a general feeling through the country that foreign corn in large quantities, and over long distances, is carried a good deal cheaper than it is upon our South-Western line.

National granary.

6510. Is there anything else that you wish to add to your evidence in chief?—I cannot help thinking that the fact that we produce less than a third of our food is a great national question.

6511. Are you referring to wheat?—Yes; to our wheat. If we had a war with even a small Power the disturbance to the sea carriage of corn would be such as would put corn at a famine price. That does not come from me particularly well, but it is a great national question. I have felt it so much that I should like just to state it now. We all remember the effect of the "Alabama" and the "Shenandoah" upon the trade of the North American States. Those were the only vessels they had, and they were enough to drive all the carriage from off the American ships. Supposing we were at war with a nation of only a tenth of our power, we could fight it and beat it anywhere, but we could not prevent the existence of privateers to a very considerable extent—to a larger extent than the South had then against the North. That, I think, would have an extraordinarily bad effect upon the carriage of corn, and it would drive the price up to more than double, through insurance and so on. It seems to me that it is as necessary that there should be a store of foreign corn in England, of, say, twelve million quarters, as that we should have an arsenal. Foreign corn is so dry that it would keep for ten years, but it would only be kept one year. It would be no great expense to any Government, because it could be shifted monthly. A million quarters a month should be passed through the stores, and we should always have then twelve million quarters of corn in store.

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6512. How long would that keep us going?—That would keep us going, with our own supply, for nearly a year. It would be a very little cost, because it could be sold off monthly and drawn in monthly, just the interest on the cost of 12,000,000 quarters of wheat. It would be of as much consequence to us as our arsenals.

6513. In the hands of the Government you mean?—That is a question for the Government.

6514. In the hands of the Government you mean?—Yes, certainly. This of course would damage farmers; we should not get exactly the great war prices, but it is a great national question, and any man who feels it as I do cannot help mentioning it.

6515. In addition to that would you artificially stimulate the growing of wheat?—I do not think so. I do not think that would do; when you can buy it so cheaply as we can I do not think the country would put up with anything of that sort.

Large and small farms compared.

6516. Is there anything else?—I think the idea that large farms have been more disastrous to the landlord than small farms is a mistake. The mistake has arisen in this way, that the small farms are upon grass land, and no doubt the grass and stock farms have paid better than the others, but if with that idea landlords cut up their arable and sheep and corn farms into small ones, I am sure they would find very much greater disaster than they do now.

6517. I think that answer is especially applicable to your part of the country, is it not?—Yes; I think it is, but with landlords who have got to do with large farms, that is where the disaster would be, because the large farm land is arable, corn, and sheep land.

6518. You would call a 300-acre farm a small farm? —Yes; we do in Wiltshire and Hampshire.

6519. That is quite a large farm in parts of the Midland counties?—Yes; I know it is.

Labour.

6520. I forget; did I ask you about the supply of labour in your district?—No; you did not mention that.

6521. Is it well maintained?—It is simply that farmers are cutting down the labour; they are not farming as well as they were; they are cutting down expenses, and instead of wanting more cottages we do not get all our cottages occupied; we do not require them to be.

Wages.

6522. Are the wages well maintained?—The wages are low; we pay from 10*s.* to 11*s.*

6523. Have they decreased in the last 10 years?—Yes, generally speaking.

6524. (*Chairman.*) How much have they fallen?—From 1*s.* to 2*s.*

6525. Since when?—In the last 10 years.

Quality of labour.

6526. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you find that the quality of the labour is good?—There is a difficulty in finding boys and young fellows. The school regulations, which are so good for them generally, specially fits them for other work than agriculture, and farmers suffer from that.

6527. You do not consider that the labour question has a very material bearing upon agriculture in your part of the country?—No. Superior machinery has helped us to do away with a good bit of labour.

Reduced labour.

6528. (*Chairman.*) Have you been able to economise labour yourself in your own farm?—Yes, a good deal, by laying poor land down to grass—land that did not pay for tillage.

6529. To what extent would you say; what percentage?—I should think 25 per cent.

6530. In quantity as well as in wages?—More in the quantity.

6531. Besides the 25 per cent. reduction in the quantity of wages, has there been a reduction in the price?—Yes, but more in the quantity than in the price.

6532. Does the 25 per cent. apply to the quantity?—That would include the two.

Allotments.

6533. (*Lord Cobham.*) Have you set apart much land for allotments?—My landlords have around Winchester; they have taken land that I used to occupy, and let it out for allotments.

6534. Land adjoining your farm?—Yes. The Dean and Chapter of Winchester have thoroughly accommodated the town of Winchester by small allotments all round it.

6535. Do they fall within the boundaries of your farm?—Yes, they did; some of my land was taken.

6536. Do you find them any convenience, or the contrary?—They are a great accommodation to the people; and no inconvenience to me.

6537. To some extent I suppose they would give you facilities for finding labour when required?—No; not much of that. It is generally used by the town people.

6538. Small tradesmen, and such as those?—Yes.

6539. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) With reference to these allotments that you have mentioned near Winchester, they are not occupied by purely agricultural labourers, I presume?—Not generally; they are citizens.

6540. There is no very great demand by the agricultural labourer for allotments?—No.

Large and small farms compared.

6541. You said just now, in answer to Lord Cobham, that you thought the landlords would make a great mistake in breaking up their large farms, or dividing them. I suppose you would say, with reference to that, that large sheep farms, such as the Wiltshire and Hampshire farms, can be more economically managed at a certain acreage than they can in smaller holdings?—Yes, I am sure of it.

6542. That is your experience?—Yes.

System of farming.

6543. May I ask, as you have been farming for many years, and even in these bad times have increased your holding, whether you have found that having this large acreage you were able to do every part of the farming, if I may call it so; that is, rear your own stock, fat your own stock, and in fact put your hand into your pocket as little as you possibly can, and to sell out when that stock has been reared, either as store stock or fat stock?—Yes, that is the system I have adopted. My great reason for having to put my hand into my pocket is to buy artificial foods, such as cake and so on. I often pay 3,000*l.* or 4,000*l.* a year for artificial food. If it were not for foreign artificial food this year half the cattle of England would have starved—literally starved.

6544. I understood you to say that you sold off your hay; does that hay include sainfoin and clover hay?—Yes.

6545. Then you feed no hay, even for your sheep?—No; that is my general practice.

6546. Of course farmers generally would not have the opportunity of having such large farms as you have but even on smaller farms do you think it would be wise for farmers to rear as much of their own stock as they possibly can, and use even their own grain for feeding the cattle?—I think they would be wise to rear all their own stock that they can; but I do not think they would be wise in using their own grain. I think our wheat, for instance, is as unwholesome a thing as you can give cattle. Most practical farmers say, "Sell "all your own stuff for what you can make, and buy "cake." This year foreign barley has been so extraordinarily cheap that that has been the great source of cattle food. You can get Russian barley at four guineas per ton. We are selling our hay at 7*l.* per ton, and buying foreign barley at four guineas per ton.

6547. And you find that a good feeding stuff?—Yes; that is a very good feeding stuff.

Cattle disease.

6548. Have you suffered at all in past years, or lately, from cattle diseases—foot-and-mouth disease, for instance?—That is the greatest comfort of the present day. We can go to market and buy anything we fancy, and bring it home and have no fear of cattle disease. The first half of my farming career it was the greatest curse possible. Often you would buy cattle, and put them into quarantine for awhile, and even then disease would come and ruin your herd. In several instances I have lost two or three hundred pounds at a go, even 500*l.*, from getting foot-and-mouth disease into a herd of dairy cattle. That is the only bright side to our present condition. We do feel free from cattle disease.

6549. I conclude that you would be a strong advocate for what is now carried out—slaughter at the ports?—I can see no possible excuse for that not being carried out, from a sense of humanity to the animals, as well as from other considerations.

6550. In fact the restrictions, in that respect, have been of great benefit to the farming interest generally?—They are inestimable.

Extension of woodlands.

6551. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Has any land been converted to woodland in your part of Hampshire?—On Lord Northbrook's estate it is taking place now.

6552. Could you tell the Commission the result of that?—It is new; they are only just on now. There are a lot of labourers out of employment on Lord Northbrook's estate, and he very wisely is planting his poor lands with larch, and he is even planting some of his underwood, which has not been very profitable. They are doing it at a very little cost, just digging a hole, and putting the tree in, and they say it will do very well. I think more of that ought to be done. Men who have got capital, and poor chalk land, would turn it to good account by growing larch trees.

6553. Larch trees?—Especially larch, I think—larch comes to money quickly.

6554. For what purpose could larch be used?—Larch is marketable in every way; it is an excellent timber. All carpenters appreciate larch.

6555. (*Lord Cobham.*) At what age does it come to maturity in your county?—It becomes fit to cut for hop poles, and so on, at about 12 years, I think, and so you thin your wood then.

6556. And for timber?—At 30 or 35 years, I think, it has got to its best.

6557. You cut it before 40 years at all events?—Yes; there are some splendid larch plantations in my neighbourhood, on the estate of a relation of Mr. Long. I believe the present Mr. Long's grandfather planted them. That is a very valuable property.

6558. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Would there be a considerable demand for larch poles as hop poles?—Yes, the small ones; the 12 year old ones.

6559. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Looking at the business of agriculture from the tenant farmers' point of view, which I understand is your point of view——?—Yes.

Local taxation and tithes.

6560. You attach much more importance to the reduction of rent than to any measures for transferring local burdens to personal property, or mitigating the incidence of the tithes?—I do.

6561–2. The question of transferring local burdens to personal property, and the question of diminishing the weight of the tithe, are more questions for the owner than for the tenant farmer?—Yes, generally speaking; only a good deal of land is held on lease you see, and as long as that lease lasts the tenant is interested in these alterations.

6563. Undoubtedly; but generally they are questions more for the owner than for the tenant farmer?—Yes; certainly.

Land paying no rent.

6564. Then you stated that a good deal of land in Hampshire and Wiltshire could not pay any rent at all, you considered—that that was the condition of things now?—Such is the case; it would hardly pay the local burdens.

6565. What per-centage of the land would you say is in that condition?—I could not say that. It would want a considerable calculation.

6566. There is an average rent from a good many different kinds of land in those localities?—Yes.

6567. This statement that the land cannot pay rent does not apply to the better land in those districts, I suppose?—No.

6568. Still, you would not like to name the percentage of land in that condition?—No.

The letting of land.

6569. Is there any difficulty in getting tenants for the better qualities of land?—No, not at a rent—it is merely a question of rent.

6570. That is to say, there are people willing to take the land at the reduced rents?—Yes; the better land.

6571. Do they make a living by it at the reduced rents?—They have not got the rents reduced sufficiently to make a living at these prices.

6572. But still, on land of that kind, it is really a question of rent?—I think so.

Local taxation.

6573. Then with reference to this question of transferring local burdens to personal property; to some extent would it be quite fair, do you think, when a certain kind of property has been subjected, for a long period of years, to special burdens, and all the dealings in that property have taken place subject to these burdens, to transfer them to some other property which had not borne them?—Yes; when the burdens are very much increased.

6574. Then you would say that the burdens have increased of late years?—I should say they have increased during the last century.

6575. Has the rate per pound increased on the rental?—I think it has.

6576. But within what time has the increase taken place—of late years?—Speaking of the poor rate, I think it has been a gradual increase from the time of Elizabeth, when it was first instituted.

6577. You could not give us any figures bearing that out?—No I could not do that.

6578. Of course you are aware that that contention of yours would be disputed?—Yes; certainly.

6579. Then is it not the case also that the difficulty of putting local burdens upon personal property is really such that it has always been found impracticable whenever experiments in that direction have been made, and that that is also the contention of a great many people who are interested in these subjects?—In reply to that remark I should say it seems very unfair that myself for instance, with a 1,000 acres, giving healthy employment to a dozen labourers, should be rated upon 1,000*l.*, whereas my neighbour giving dangerous and unhealthy employment to two or three hundred people, should be rated upon his house, and upon his buildings, perhaps upon a hundred a year, and he should be making 5,000*l.* or 6,000*l.* a year, and I should be losing 500*l.* or 600*l.* I could give you plenty of instances of that sort. That looks to be monstrous upon the face of it.

6580. If, as a matter of fact, experiments have been made in trying to put burdens of that kind upon personal property, and they have always failed, would not that be a reason for caution in trying to do it again?—I think it shows a great lack of ingenuity.

6581. But still it is the case, that this is an experiment in taxation which has been tried again and again?—Yes.

6582. And has not often been successful? I do not know of any case; do you know of any?—No. That theory—that wish—has been outvoted. It is merely a question of voting power in the House of Commons, I suppose.

6583. The American Government, I believe, have tried very extensive experiments in putting taxes upon personal property, as well as upon real property, and the record is that they have completely failed all over the United States?—Yes; but they have failed because the majority of the voters there prefer things as they are.

6584. No; the law is, that both should pay taxes; but, as a matter of fact, personal property escapes?—I think that you must admit that that question is disputed.

6585. There is a great deal of literature upon the subject, and I wish merely to put it upon record that this point is disputed, and to raise it; I do not think we can go into the discussion profitably?—No.

Corn returns and tithe.

6586. Then with regard to the corn returns, am I to understand, from what you said about the unfairness of the present returns, that they are collected and made up in a different way from what was the case at the time of the Tithe Commutation?—Yes; I think it ought to be altered.

6587. Is it not made the same way now that it was done then?—I suspect it is.

6588. If it is made the same way now that it was done then, and if you make an alteration in the method, would not that be a reason for making an alteration in the tithe commutation itself?—I think that when the commutation was made it was clearly understood that the corn return should be a fair return of what it made. That is not the case. We want to revert to what was the intention then.

6589. When the tithe commutation was made, then I believe the corn returns existed; they were practically obtained for other purposes, and all that was introduced into the Tithe Commutation Act was a clause stating that these exact prices, which were well understood, were to be taken, first of all, for the purpose of the commutation itself, and then for reckoning the changes from year to year?—I think the system has fallen into abuse.

6590. Has it changed?—I suspect it has; but I cannot say positively.

6591. Would that not be a point to be inquired into before any of these suggestions could be considered?—Yes, perhaps so.

6592. (*Lord Cobham.*) I think you said, in answer to a question of mine, that it would involve a change in the law?—Yes; I propose a change in the law.

6593. (*Mr. Giffen.*) It is a suggestion that would involve a change in the basis of the commutation itself, so as to be just to the tithe-owner?—That may be so; I cannot dispute with you upon that point.

6594. I merely wish to have this brought forward so as to be on record—that that would be a point to be considered?—Yes.

6595. Have you any calculation as to what per-centage of the tithe rentcharge generally could be reduced if those amendments of yours were introduced?—No. I should think perhaps from 1*s.* to 2*s.* a quarter.

6596. On barley and oats, as well as wheat?—Yes. My remark is problematic. I cannot be certain about that, of course.

6597. It would not be a very material matter in any case, except to the owner?—I think that is material to the owner.

6598. To the owner?—Yes. 2*s.* a quarter when the quarter is very low, say 25*s.* a quarter, is a large proportion of the whole, but 2*s.* a quarter is not of much consequence when it is 40*s.* or 50*s.* a quarter. It is a very large proportion of 25*s.*; it is a twelfth.

6599. You have not made a calculation of how much, in point of fact, the per-centage in the tithe may be?—No; it may be more.

National granary.

6600. Then with reference to your suggestion as to the importance of encouraging the cultivation of wheat on account of political considerations, because of the danger of wheat going to famine prices, even if we were at war with a small naval Power——

6601. (*Chairman.*) I do not think you proposed to increase the cultivation of wheat?—Quite the contrary.

6601*a*. You merely meant that for political reasons there should be a quantity stored?—Yes.

6602. (*Mr. Giffen.*) The question I wish to put is, that that was not put forward by you as a measure to benefit the agricultural interest at all?—No. It is impertinent to the case, perhaps; but I ventured to mention it.

6603. It is perhaps not a thing which we can go into the discussion of here—it is more a naval question than an agricultural question?—It is a national question.

6604. But I should like to ask you whether your attention has been called to a pamphlet lately issued by Admiral Colomb, a distinguished naval officer, in which he does not lay stress upon this point, of the storage of wheat?—I have not seen that.

6605. Have you referred to the debate in the House of Lords last Session, in which this very question was discussed?—No.

Reduction.

6606. (*Mr. Clay.*) I gather from your evidence that you consider that immediate relief is to be found in the reduction of rent?—Yes.

6607. What amount would you consider has been the fall of rent since 1882, the last year of the Richmond Commission?—Altogether I consider that we have had a fall of rent of 50 per cent., and I should think half of that has been since 1882.

6608. Do you consider at the present time that with that fall it means ruin to the tenant farmers to go on paying the existing rent and keeping up the cultivation of the farm?—I think the farmers at the present rent and prices are very dissatisfied, very restless, and very uncomfortable. As Sir Michael Hicks-Beach said, it in the constant decline of things that has frightened us. We cannot seem to get to the bottom of it. If farmers could see a good price for their stock, as they did a few years ago, a very large portion of them would sell out and go out of the business. They hang on because of the low price of their selling stuff—their cattle, their implements, their everything.

6609. This year for the English farmers has been very exceptional?—This year is exceptional; the crops are exceptionally bad.

6610. Very bad; not only for the tenant farmer but also for the landlord?—Very bad.

6611. You told us what would benefit the tenant farmer—that was the reduction of rent?—Yes.

6612. Have you any idea of what means would benefit the landlord?—I think the purely agricultural landlord, a man who depends wholly on his acres, is doomed.

Laying down to permanent pasture.

6613. Speaking from your experience, and I believe you have had a large experience, you state that a very important question both for the landlord and for the tenant farmer just now is laying down to grass; have you been successful in that business?—Yes, I have laid down, I should think, 2,000 acres of poor arable land to grass, and instead of losing money as that land did before I consider it pays its way. I have stopped all expenses upon it. One man now can look after 200 or 300 acres, whereas formerly it would take seven or eight, or perhaps five or six.

6614. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are you speaking of permanent grass, or of laying it down for five or six years?—You can call it permanent grass. You may plough it up if you see that it will pay you to grow a crop of oats upon it, or if the stock which you have got a great lot of owing to constantly laying down sell very well, then you can clear out a lot of stock and plough up a bit. That has been my policy, but if I were farming my own land I would never plough it out of grass. But now stock is accumulating with us, because we cannot sell it. That has been one inducement for me to take fresh farms, not that I can see any amount of profit in the ordinary way, but because rather than sell my stock at a loss I have taken fresh land to put it on, so long as I can find capital to do it with.

6615. (*Mr. Clay.*) So you would recommend that if that land is not able to yield the rent or the expenses upon it, it should go to grass?—Certainly.

6616. How many years does it take with you to bring grass to the paying point?—If you put land down to grass in a fair condition, and if you never mow it, and at once begin feeding that grass with cotton cake, you have no check at all; it grows a fair amount of grass from the beginning to the end. It is a little more productive perhaps the first year than in any other year, but it will carry a fair amount of stock all through. But if you mow and carry off the hay, and if you feed sheep and fold them off it, it will be good for nothing very soon.

6617. You believe that the nitrogen received from the cotton cake, the undecorticated and the decorticated, is the most valuable ingredient you can put on grass for either cattle or sheep?—That makes the best and cheapest manure, inasmuch as the cattle or sheep will generally pay for it.

6618. And grass is like anything else, when it is not fed it will never produce richness?—That is it. Sir John Lawes has clearly proved, and so have many other people, that if you have only a field of couch—nothing but couch—if you fence it, and have a pond of water, and put cattle on it feeding with cake, it will give you good pasture. I could give you instances where no grass has ever been sown except sainfoin; the sainfoin has died out, and possession of the ground has been taken by other grasses. I can show you pasture fed in that way worth 2*l.* an acre now where no seed has ever been sown.

6619. I can corroborate you in all these points myself practically?—You know it is a fact.

6620. Yes; but I only want to put on record what you know about it?—A pasture is no good unless you have a fence round it, and some water. With that, any land will make a pasture, I think, but some quicker than others.

6621. What is the general price of laying down that land to grass?—I do not at all approve of expensive seeding. I have had many good pastures from 12*s.* an acre. It depends much more upon how you treat it afterwards than upon what seed you sow.

6622. By the course of feeding the sheep with cake?—With cake, that is the secret, but it is better with cattle than with sheep.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

Compensation.

6623. After you have done all that, and made the farm, what part does the Agricultural Holdings Act play; are you compensated for laying down the grass under that?—I have laid down grass under that Act, and have been awarded compensation under it, but the Agricultural Holdings Act is so complicated that very few of us farmers can understand it, and I think it ought to be amended. I do not consider there is sufficient encouragement for high farming. Rather than lay land down under the Agricultural Holdings Act, I should prefer to have it in my own hands, and break it up, and have a couple of crops of corn before leaving. The compensation awarded is not equivalent to that.

6624. That would be very damaging for the farm if the owner wishes to let the farm again?—It would very. I know many farmers who are about to leave, who do that. They feel "if I leave this down to grass "there will be plenty of competition for this farm; if "I plough it up I can take it again on my own terms."

6625. If the Agricultural Holdings Act was amended and strengthened in that way, it would enable the outgoing tenant to leave that grass land, which would be beneficial to the landlord and to the incoming tenant?—Yes. The Agricultural Holdings Act ought to be so altered as to prevent the evil I have indicated, and put a premium on the best farming.

6626. (*Chairman.*) How should it be altered?—I cannot go into that now, it would take too long.

6627. (*Mr. Clay.*) But you consider the machinery and the expense of working that Agricultural Holdings Act is too cumbersome?—Yes, I think if you had a competent arbitrator in the county to settle such a question it would be a great relief to landlord and tenant.

Official referee.

6628. It has been put before this Commission that there should be an official referee?—Yes, that would be better perhaps.

6629. It would thereby save what is the abuse of the Act—the law expenses and the solicitor's expenses?—Yes, and there is its ambiguity too—we cannot understand it.

6630. Would you favour the appointment of an official referee in each county, and, in a large county, in each district?—Yes, in the hope that his action would encourage an outgoing tenant to improve his farm and leave it in the best condition.

6631. You would have a man to go and perform that duty of giving cheap justice—cheap compensation to the outgoing tenants?—I think so. I think a practical farmer would be the best authority; he would be the best judge of what would be advantageous to a farm.

6632. Do you think that the referee's decisions should be final, and not liable to appeals at law?—Yes; it would be perhaps difficult to find a man who would have the confidence of landlord and tenant—you must consider both interests.

6633. As far as you see just now, as the Agricultural Holdings Act stands, a small tenant is afraid to enter upon it?—I have heard of such cases.

6634. The expense of getting his law suit outweighs the sum awarded?—Yes, I have heard of such sums awarded. Counter-claims are of course provoked and tenants are afraid of them.

6635. But still the landlord is entitled to a counterclaim as against an outgoing tenant?—Yes, but still the Act does not work well; it causes friction.

6636. This official referee would deal with the counterclaim the same as he would deal with the claim itself?—Yes.

Outgoing and incoming tenant.

6637. Are you of opinion that this Act should deal only with the outgoing tenant and the landlord, and not with the incoming tenant?—Yes, unless the incoming tenant likes to take the place of the landlord which is very common.

6638. There would be no contract between the outgoing tenant and the incoming tenant—the outgoing tenant's contract is between himself and the landlord?—Yes, entirely; but the incoming tenant might take

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the landlord's position if it were so agreed between him and the landlord.

6639. But the outgoing tenant is not bound to accept the incoming tenant?—No; he may or he may not as he thinks best.

6640. The incoming tenant may be a man of straw—where is the outgoing tenant then?—Just so.

6641. Does not the whole thing rest between the landlord and the outgoing tenant?—Yes.

Slaughter of cattle at port of debarkation.

6642. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) In reply to a question with regard to the benefit that arose from the slaughter of cattle at the ports, you added also that you considered the question of humanity towards the animals. I take it from that answer that you were rather indicating that there should be nothing but dead meat brought across?—Yes, I meant slaughter on the other side.

6643. Do you think that would encourage very much the breeding of young cattle among farmers in this country?—Protection from disease does encourage the breeding and keeping of cattle, but since meat comes over here in perfect condition in a cooled state, I see no reason why live cattle should come at all.

6644. Have you considered the question with regard to the interest of feeders in certain counties in the country who desire to have imported store cattle in those counties?—I thought you were asking with reference to the consumer of meat; I think he would be greatly advantaged by keeping out disease. With regard to the feeder, I have hardly considered that.

Extension of woodlands.

6645. You spoke a good deal about the larch; may I ask if in your county the larch keeps free of disease for from 10 to 12 years?—If it is free from disease?

6646. Yes, from lice?—It grows very clear and well. I have never known of disease in a larch.

6647. Are the young trees raised from local seed, or is seed brought from a distance?—I think the planter would grow his own seed; he would have a nursery and plant them out, but they are sold by seedsmen and nurserymen at a moderate price.

6648. What I want to know is whether these plants which seem to do so well in your county were brought from a higher and more northern part of the country and throve?—I do not think so, but I am not certain about that.

Workhouse occupants.

6649. Have you any idea what is the proportion in the poor-houses in your county of rural labourers as compared with those engaged in other employments during their active life?—I think they are chiefly the rural population.

6650. In your poor-houses?—In our unions. I think so.

Reduction of rents.

6651. (*Mr. Little.*) I think the gist of your evidence last night was with regard to rent, that in a large part of Hampshire and Wiltshire rent had almost entirely disappeared, and that the landlord in many cases did not get enough to pay for the upkeep of the estate?—I would rather stick to the statement that the rents have gone down 50 per cent.

6652. You gave us an instance where you hired a square mile of land for a sovereign?—Yes.

6653. And other instances where the land was hired for a very small sum?—Yes, I spoke of a whole estate.

6654. And the farms you described as having a certain portion of good land, and a certain portion of down which is worth little or nothing?—Yes.

6655. Then there must be a considerable part of those counties which now produce no rent to the landlord?—Yes, it is so.

6656. If the decline should continue, the landlord must either disappear or become the occupier of the farm?—Yes.

6657. In that case the tenant farmer disappears?—Yes.

6658. The cause is, I presume, that the cost of production is so very near to the value of the produce?—That is it.

6659. And there is too little margin left for rent?—That is it.

6660. Notwithstanding the reductions that have been made in the rent, you say the tenant is not in a satisfactory position?—That is so.

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6661. You said the tenant farmers would not go on getting only a bare interest on their capital without any reward for their labour and skill?—No. It is worse than that—they are sinking capital.

Changes in system of farming.

6662. If there is no chance of raising the price of produce, what can be done; must you not either alter the description of the produce or decrease the cost of production?—Yes.

6663. What are the items in the cost of production which can be decreased, in your opinion, outside of rent?—I think the farmer generally attempts to grow too much corn and consequently spends too much on labour.

6664. You think that labour can be reduced?—Yes, by laying the unprofitable land down to grass.

Local taxation.

6665. That is a change of system. You think that rates and taxes, though they may not have increased, are a part of the expenditure, and that they are relatively a larger part than they were?—Yes.

6666. The produce having diminished in value?—They are relatively larger.

Changes in system of farming.

6667. I believe that you have not only farmed very largely and farmed a great variety of soil, but you have gone into many different systems of farming?—Yes.

6668. You have experimented?—Yes.

6669. You have never been afraid of stepping out of the beaten track?—No.

6670. You have tried market gardening to some extent?—Yes, and poultry.

6671. You have been an adventurous farmer?—I have tried everything I could think of.

6672. Is there much prospect, in your opinion, of some new system of farming being introduced which would be more successful than the old one—any great change?—No.

6673. Apart from laying all the poor land down to grass and increasing the breeding of cattle and sheep, do you see any great outlet for the farmers in the greater part of the country?—No. My idea is to keep down the expenditure upon unprofitable land; the money is lost upon the poor part; whatever you put there is lost. Stop that leak, and do your better land as well as possible.

6674. Would you say farmers generally are prepared where an opportunity offers to enter on fresh branches of farming and to develop fresh systems?—No, the farmers generally are very conservative.

6675. Are there any hindrances to them in developing their land in fresh methods?—No, I think not.

6676. Is not the difficulty of transport in many cases a great hindrance?—Do you mean railway carriage?

State loans for constructing railways.

6677. Do you want railways?—Of course, if there were railways in some districts the milk trade would be further developed; but that would be at the expense of those who have already got a milk trade—that would lower the price.

6678. Do you think that the suggestion which has been made here that the Government should lend money to help to make tramways would be of any advantage in your part of the country?—No, I do not think so at all.

Restrictions in agreements.

6679. You said that the restrictions on the growth and sale of different descriptions of produce were unknown in your part of the country now; may I ask whether they are entirely abandoned, or whether they are only suspended?—They are entirely abandoned.

6680. Do you mean that they are not introduced into agreements?—If they are they are ignored.

6681. But that is not quite the same thing; are they introduced into agreements?—They speak now in agreements of carrying out the best "practice of the country," which is very vague. Tenant farmers generally know that if they break the letter of the lease, unless the landlord can prove damages, he would have no chance of remedy.

6682. But the restrictions still remain in the agreements which are offered to tenants on hiring a farm?—I have do doubt they do to a great extent.

6683. In your own case have you any conditions?—Only with regard to leaving, and that is general—farm, as it were, how you like until the last two years; and then very properly there are restrictions.

6684. Would you say that restrictions are unnecessary?—With the exception of the last two years.

6685. Would you say they are generally ineffectual? —Yes; with that same exception.

6686. In your opinion many of them might safely be abandoned?—Yes, they have become obsolete.

6687. What would be the protection to the landlord supposing that the land were reduced in value by a constant succession of crops and a removal of produce? —I do not see what protection he would have.

6688. Then you admit the necessity for some restrictions?—I only admit the necessity of such restriction for the last two years of a tenancy.

6689. Would you be satisfied if a tenant could show his farm in the last year of his tenancy with good crops and clean?—Perfectly; whatever he had done before.

6690. You think the landlord would be perfectly protected by that proviso?—Yes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

6691. I understood that you had been compensated for laying down to grass under the Agricultural Holdings Act, and I rather gathered that you were disappointed—not dissatisfied, but disappointed with the result?—I was not exactly disappointed, because I knew that would be the result. But as a matter of fact, I might state that that was worth a pound an acre, but by irrigation with sewage it became worth 4*l.* an acre, and that was a permanent improvement, so that I quadrupled the value of the land, and on leaving, instead of ploughing it up and getting a crop or two out of it, I received 5*l.* an acre.

Laying down to permanent pasture.

6692. Did that sum recoup you?—It had been paying me all through; that was their argument.

6693. Were you paid in cash?—Yes, they paid me in cash.

6694. Do you happen to know the basis of the calculation of the referees?—No, I do not.

6695. I suppose they did not state that?—No.

6696. I presume they took into account the inherent capabilities of the soil—they were bound to do so by the Act?—I do not see how they could do that, because the inherent capabilities of the soil has not prevented its being generally reduced in value by almost a half during the last 14 years.

6697. The land was capable of inprovement—that was an inherent capability?—Yes, but then all land is capable of improvement, and yet has fallen in value.

6698. Yes, but it was capable of so much improvement as you have made?—By the accident that I could command sewage to be thrown upon it—a mere accident.

6699. (*Lord Cobham.*) You could have ploughed up that land, could you not?—Yes, if I had not bound myself by the Agricultural Holdings Act.

6700. Were you bound under the Agricultural Holdings Act not to do so?—Yes, I laid it down under the Agricultural Holdings Act, which restricted me from ploughing it up.

6701. You had not that lever over the landlord—you could not threaten him with an intention to do that?—No, I could not do that.

Land paying no rent.

6702. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I think you told us that in Hampshire and Wiltshire there was a considerable quantity of land where it was beyond the question of rent altogether and it had gone quite out of cultivation? —Yes, it never was worth much.

6703. What sort of crops did it grow formerly?—Turnips and oats and down to grass four or five years.

6704. Well farmed, could it be made useful?—Yes, it took its regular course with the rest of the farm.

6705. How many quarters to the acre of oats would it grow?—After the turnips were fed off it would grow perhaps four quarters.

6706. Then do I understand that the present condition of this land is due principally to the fall in prices?—Yes.

6707. Is the quantity of it very considerable?—Yes, it is considerable.

6708. You are not able to tell us how much?—No, speaking roughly I should think an eighth of the county.

6709. An eighth of the county?—An eighth or a tenth of the arable portion of the county.

6710. Of which county?—Of Hampshire.

6711. And of Wiltshire?—And of South Wiltshire.

6712. I suppose we can obtain tolerably reliable evidence on this point by sending a sub-commissioner into those counties?—Yes, that could be found out.

Reduction of rents.

6713. Now in the case of other land that you have spoken of where the rent is not sufficiently reduced to enable the farmers to continue farming at a profit, what class of land is that?—The ordinary Hampshire land, the sheep and oat land.

6714. You said, I think, that that had been reduced 50 per cent.?—Yes.

6715. How much more reduction would be required to make it profitable?—That is a very difficult question because profit depends so much upon season and the accident of the prices of stock as well as of corn. It is difficult to say that, but I know that a great many of the farmers would leave if they could not get another 25 per cent. reduction, if it were not for the loss they would sustain in selling off their affairs.

6716. Now, if I may assume that a 25 per cent. further reduction was made, what proportion of the total cost of production would the rent bear to those outgoings; it would be something very small, would it not?—Yes, very much smaller than it used to be.

6717. What do you put it at now in your own case? —I have never reckoned it.

6718. You have a very large outlay every year I suppose in labour, and in cake, and fertilizers, and one thing and another?—Yes. My labour would be more than my rent; my fertilizers and cake bill would be greater; then would come my rates and taxes. I should think the rent would be perhaps about one-sixth of the whole outgoings, but I am not quite sure of that.

6719. So that even if you get this further reduction the relief would be comparatively very small?—Yes. A very common question in our market is: Is the land worth anything? That is what you hear farmers saying one to the other, and the reply is given: Nothing this year, but we hope it will be better.

6720. Then if the present continuous fall in prices—for it is almost continuous——?—Yes.

6721. If that continues, this further reduction of rent that you speak of would practically do very little as a remedy?—Very little.

6722. In fact, it seems to me—I gather rather that that is your opinion—that under those circumstances the tenant farmer would be doomed as well, as you say, the landlord is at present?—Very nearly.

Low prices.

6723. Now what is the chief cause of all this in your opinion?—Certainly low prices.

6724. And the real remedy I suppose would be an improvement in prices?—Yes. The low prices arise from natural causes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

6725. Now with regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act, I understood you to say that it is complicated, and that farmers do not understand it—I will assume—I feel pretty sure that you understand it?—No, I think it is rather puzzling.

6726. Cannot you make to us any suggestion as to amendment which might be useful?—I think what Mr. Clay has suggested would be a great help.

6727. That you should have an arbitrator?—Yes.

6728. Is not the place of an arbitrator such as he describes sufficiently filled now by the practised valuers whom you appoint yourselves?—No; they do not seem to know what to do, and their action in respect to it has not conduced to the encouragement to leave farms in the high state of cultivation so much desired.

6729. In your county?—In this question of mine we had two of the best valuers, one of Hampshire and one of Wiltshire. They had not settled so large a question as this before. It was something like 300 acres—indeed it was more than 300 acres—and they really did not know much what to do. I could not tell them, that was very certain. The landlord and myself told them to settle it how they liked, and not to refer, and they felt their way in the dark. They did not know what to do with any degree of confidence.

6730. Does that not point rather to this, that it is the administration of the Act rather than the Act itself which is to blame?—Perhaps so.

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6731. I am only seeking from a practical witness like yourself for information for our own guidance?—I should not have known how to settle that question. Supposing I had argued that I had made the land worth four times as much as it was before, and then asked them to pay me four times its value down, they would not have done so, and I could not have expected them to do so, but that would have been justice.

Slaughter of cattle at port of debarkation.

6732. Now with regard to what you said as to the present arrangements with reference to the contagious diseases of cattle being so great a blessing. By the present arrangements you are aware, I suppose, that the landing of all animals is prohibited entirely from Europe, and that when they come from any other country they are obliged to be slaughtered at the port of landing?—Yes.

6733. You are aware that that is the arrangement existing at the present moment?—Yes.

6734. But it is not permanent at all?—No, that is it. I wish it were permanent.

6735. Would you like to see the discretion which at present rests with the Board of Agriculture removed, and the slaughter at the port of landing made absolute?—Yes, or at the port of embarkation.

6736. You would rather go further and prohibit the entry of all live animals into the country at all?—Yes.

6737. Would you be in favour of legislation to that effect?—I should.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

6738. (*Mr. Long.*) With reference to the Agricultural Holdings Act, one question further. Have you known many other instances occurring with other occupiers than yourself where the Act has failed?—I have not known any other instances where it has been used.

6739. Where it has been put into force you mean?—That is so.

6740. Then it would be right to say that, so far as your experience goes, it has very seldom been put into force?—Yes.

6741. Do you mind my asking you ——?—You may ask me any questions you like.

6742. Whether your evidence represents solely your own experience, or whether you give it as representing your family and the enormous experience gained by your family?—I think I represent the feeling of farmers generally.

6743. Have not your family had exceptional opportunites in consequence of having rented such enormous quantities of land in different parts of the country?—Well, I do not think they have availed themselves of this Act at all—I do not know that they have.

6744. As a matter of fact, they do rent at the present moment probably more land than any other one family in the country?—Yes; I should think a great deal more.

6745. Amounting now to many thousands of acres?—I should think 30,000 to 40,000 acres.

Reduction of rents.

6746. With reference to the rent difficulty, notwithstanding these heavy reductions of 50 per cent., you still consider it is too high?—Because that is the only thing we can seem to touch—to alter.

6747. As a matter of fact, in the greater part of Wiltshire at all events—Hampshire I only know of from hearsay—in all recent agreements, have not the farmers practically had the fixing of the rent in their own hands?—Yes, and they thought the reduction would have been sufficient.

6748. I mean even now leases are of very little value, and many of them have ceased, have they not?—Yes.

6749. Consequently, if a tenant came to his landlord and said, "I want a reduction of so much more," is there not every probability that he would get it rather than be parted with?—That is the case in very many instances, but it is not invariably so by any means.

6750. But still it is more often than not the case, is it not?—Yes.

6751. Does it not especially apply to that part of Wiltshire and Hampshire which you described just now where there are those big corn and sheep farms?—Yes, I think so.

Probable result of continued depression.

6752. You told us that the purely agricultural landlords are doomed; have you formed any idea yourself as to who should take their place with reference to the necessary outgoings for maintenance and improvements?—That would entirely go to the wall. Very little has been spent in maintenance and improvements lately, because the landlord has found that any money invested is money lost upon the land, and that he gets no interest at all for it. If he puts up new buildings, the tenant still comes and wants a reduction of rent, owing to the bad times. So that there has been very little money spent on land, and there will not be money spent. We can see no other people to own the land but rich commercial men, and so on.

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6753. But, as a matter of fact, is it not the case that properties which would be described as purely agricultural are really altogether unsaleable now?—There is some land within 4 miles of Winchester which 30 years ago was sold for 3,000*l.*, consisting of 175 acres. which I bought the other day for 1,300*l.* I was farming it, and got it laid down to grass. I did not want to lose it, because it was in a good state in the way of grass made in the way I have been telling you of. I bought that land for 7*l.* 10*s.* an acre, tithe 6*l.* per annum.

6754. Was not that rather a special case?—That same land had been sold for 3,000*l.* within 30 years.

6755. I believe that between Winchester and Andover there is an enormous quantity of land which can be bought at almost any price?—At 2*l.* an acre I should think.

6756. It is practically unsaleable?—Yes, it is worth nothing except for rabbits.

6757. Anybody who desires that the cure of agricultural depression should be of a permanent character would be brought face to face with the fact that if the agricultural landlord is doomed, with him will go the necessary provision for maintenance and improvement of landed estates?—Yes, and the labourers' employment and income.

6758. Precisely; it would involve in the end the destruction of all agricultural processes?—Yes, that is gradually taking place now.

Local taxation.

6759. One question with regard to the rates: Mr. Giffen put a question to you as to the experience in America with reference to the incidence of local rates upon personal property. Would your rates be met or partly met by contributions out of revenue which is solely produced by personal property being devoted to the aid of local taxation?—Yes.

6760. Is it not the case, notwithstanding Mr. Giffen's travelling over to America, that he might have found experience in our own country? In the year 1888 was not a very large contribution made which was derived solely from personal property?—It was; that was a step in the right direction.

6761. Would that be the sort of course you would like to see followed in future?—Yes, we see no great difficulty in that.

6762. I do not know whether you have followed the rise and fall of your local rates in Hampshire. Has the county rate increased or decreased?—I think there is some slight increase since the county councils.

6763. The county councils have in a great many cases increased the expenditure?—Yes.

6764. Rents, and consequently assessments have fallen?—Yes.

6765. Is it your opinion that the rates have not increased as much as they otherwise would have done having regard to the large fall in assessments?—I really have not followed that.

6766. You have not studied it?—No.

Workhouse occupants.

6767. One question with regard to the paupers; Mr. Gilmour asked you whether the inhabitants of the workhouses of Hampshire were not mainly of the rural population; is it not the fact that the inhabitants of the rural workhouses are practically confined to three classes, the infirm, the aged, and orphan, or deserted children?—Yes, I think they are.

6768. It may practically be said that in the rural workhouses pauperism, with which we are familiar in the urban districts is unknown—they are rather hospitals for the sick and the infirm, and homes for orphan and deserted children, than institutions for anything else?—Yes, chiefly so.

Particulars of rates.

6769. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Can you say what amount you pay in rates?—No, I cannot. I have not get it here.

6770. Nor what the average rate in the pound is over these 5,500 acres?—No, I am sorry I did not bring that with me.

6771. (*Chairman.*) Can you supply it, because it is very important information?—Yes, I could supply it.

6772. Could you show year by year how much you had paid in rates?—Yes.

6773. (*Mr. Dalton.*) For the last 10 years?—I think I could; I could get a statement of that from the office. (See Appendix A. XXIII.)

6774. Could you give the rates and the rental? I think it was said that now the rates bear relatively a larger proportion to the rent than they did?—I think the comparison was with profits.

6775. We would find out by the statement you have just promised whether it was a larger proportion of the rent or not?—Yes, I will try and supply that.

Local taxation.

6776. Then I think you were under the impression that personalty does not contribute to the rates?—Not sufficiently.

6777. Take the case of railways. Shares in railways are personal property, are they not?—Yes.

6778. And they are rated to the full?—Yes, they are an exception.

6779. Then you have canals, waterworks, gasworks, and so forth?—Yes.

6780. You would not put an additional rate upon those, I suppose, if they pay rates already?—No; I should only put the net over other property.

6781. That would very much reduce the amount of personalty that you would get a contribution from?—Yes.

6782. Then I think you mentioned a case where some man, employing 200 or 300 persons, paid so much less rates than a farmer employing a smaller number?—Yes.

6783. What case had you got in mind?—I should speak of large factories.

6784. A factory pays rates?—Yes, upon the rent of the building.

6785. But is that not a very heavy item?—No; I think a very small one in proportion to the income.

6786. The income of the factory depends to some extent upon the fact that 200 or 300 persons are employed there?—It may.

6787. Then it would be paying urban rates which would be higher than the rural?—If it were in a town, yes.

6788. I meant that; but were you under the impression that a man owning a factory of that kind was only paying the rates on the house that he was living in?—And on his workshops too.

6789. In the case of a farmer, he pays his rates in one lump for his house and for the property on which he carries on his business?—Yes.

6790. But if we are going to compare the employer of labour in a town with the farmer, we should have to take the rates he pays upon his house and also the rates he pays for his factory?—Certainly.

6791. To make a fair comparison, that would have to be considered?—Yes.

6791*a*. (*Mr. Channing.*) You spoke of bringing personalty under rating, in order to get a relief to the rating burdens on the land?—Yes.

Assessment to rates.

6792. Are you aware that in some unions the assessment that farmers have to pay upon is actually higher than the assessment of houses in urban districts in those unions; have you any cases of that kind within your own knowledge?—I am well aware that the tradesman pays rent only upon his house and his workshop in which he may carry on, and does carry on, an enormous business and employs a great many hands and makes a great income, whereas we pay rates upon our house and farm, and perhaps are losing money.

6793. That is hardly the point that I meant. Are you aware that in certain unions—the union which I have lived in, for instance, in Northamptonshire—the assessment to the poor-rate of the houses in the urban part of that union is very much lower—put it at about half the annual value—than the rate of assessment must be upon farms?—No, I did not know that, but I have no doubt as to the general fact that I have stated, that we are over-rated with regard to the poor and the roads.

6794. Supposing there are many instances of that kind, the question of assessment would have to be gone into as well as of the incidence?—Yes, certainly.

Railway rates.

6795. Now about railway rates, do you object to the existing railway rates only because there is sometimes a preference given to foreign produce?—I think they are too high,

6796. They are too high for English produce?—Yes.

6797. Are you satisfied with the return to the rates and charges of last year, which I suppose is the usual thing now, or do you think we could go farther than that?—I think we ought to go farther.

6798. Do you think that the trader ought to have some means of obtaining the lowering of the existing charges as well as a remedy in the case of an increase in the existing charges?—Yes I think if possible agricultural produce ought to be carried cheaper than it is.

Official referee.

6799. Now about the official referee, I understand your point to be that your main reason for assenting to that question of Mr. Clay is, that you would prefer a skilled man to carry out such arbitrations to the ordinary type of valuer?—Yes. I think it wants an expert.

Laying down to permanent pasture.

6800. You recommend laying down in permanent pasture as a cure for agricultural trouble in a good many districts; would you also support the right of a tenant to lay down and obtain, even if the consent of his landlord is withheld, compensation for laying down if the official referee declared that that was an improvement in the character of the farm?—I think that would be rather hard upon the landlord. He would perhaps have to pay a sum which he could not afford to pay, and when he did not want to make any outlay at all upon his land. That would be his feeling. I think that would be rather hard upon the landlord.

6801. So you would leave it open?—Yes, I would.

6802. In cases where the estates are very much burdened, where the landlord was not able to do this, you would leave it entirely open?—Yes, I do not think it would be fair to serve the landlord so.

Cattle disease.

6803. You spoke of cattle disease, and you expressed a very strong opinion as to that?—Yes.

6804. Have you formed any opinion as to the losses to farmers from tuberculosis, and what there ought to be done in that matter?—It is a very serious disease, and there are very few herds without it, that is my opinion, and I think it is a matter that ought to be taken up.

6805. You think the losses are so great?—I know they are.

6806. That is a matter which calls for urgent attention?—I think so.

6807. As soon as the Commissioners' report is out?—Yes, I have thought a good bit about it.

6808. You spoke of land being on lease very largely in Hampshire?—Yes.

Reduction of rents.

6809. How are the adjustments of rent managed in the leases there; are the leaseholders able to obtain reductions?—In most cases they have done so. It depends very much upon the condition of the tenant and the landlord. If the tenant is poor and cannot pay his landlord makes him an allowance.

System of farming.

6810. You seem to prefer cotton cake for improving the permanent pasture?—Yes.

6811. Is that partly because of the higher per-centage of nitrogen?—Yes.

6812. Or because of the cheaper cost?—Because of the higher percentage of nitrogen.

6813. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is that decorticated or undecorticated?—Decorticated is the best, the richest.

6814. (*Mr. Channing.*) You think it improves the grass quicker than linseed cake?—I know it does. Its manurial value is greater.

Restrictions in agreements.

6815. As to the question of free sale and free cultivation, I suppose you would limit what you have said rather to leases would you not in saying that it was quite enough to leave it only to the last two years?—Yes.

6816. In yearly tenancies would you not recognize the justice of the landlord having an agreement that

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there should be a manurial return?—Yes, but if he were wise he would not take any notice of any technical flaw, but if he saw that the tenant was generally farming badly, he would take advantage of his agreement.

6817. I understand that most of the penal rents and agreements of that kind are not only obsolete, but are being left out of the new agreements now being made in Hampshire, such as the clauses for mowing twice and that sort of thing?—New leases and agreements in Hampshire are I am sure much more liberal than they ever were before.

6818. Do you mean that they are generally coming to the type of "fair husbandry of the district"?—Yes.

Tenants' capital.

6819. Now, you were asked a question by Mr. Long as to the farmers being able to fix their own rents practically; that is true to a great extent, but is it not limited by the fact that the farmer is compelled to lose by leaving his farm; there is a loss of capital involved?—Yes.

6820. What would you put the average loss of capital at; what percentage? It has been estimated by Sir James Caird and others, what would you put it yourself at?—In how many years?

6821. On quitting the farm?—Some years the tenant would not lose anything. If it was a good year to go out there would be an inducement to go out, if the stock were high; but if the stock were low it would be a disaster to go out.

6822. It has been put by Sir James Caird at about 10 per cent. of the tenant's capital on the average. What do you think of that?—Just moving from one farm to another.

6822*a*. Yes?—I do not agree with that.

6823. You think it depends more upon the circumstances?—Yes.

Laying down to permanent pasture.

6824. (*Mr. Everett.*) You have had a great deal of experience in laying poor land down to grass. Do you lay it down in a corn crop generally?—Yes, always.

6825. In your neighbourhood a great deal of sainfoin is grown is it not?—Yes.

6826. Do you find laying the land down to grass is better than laying it down to sainfoin?—No, as long as the land is fresh the sainfoin is most profitable, I mean if it is not grown for 20 years. If it is suitable for sainfoin it is the most profitable crop you can possibly grow.

6827. I was wondering whether laying it down to sainfoin for a few years, then taking corn for a few years, and then laying it down to sainfoin again would not be better?—No, sainfoin will not grow under about 20 years. Sainfoin as a rule will stand perhaps 7 years, but after that you must expect no more sainfoin there for 20 years. It has taken out all that it can find of that which it requires.

Land paying no rent.

6828. (*Lord Vernon.*) The land that you speak of when you talk about rent disappearing is very bad land is it not?—It is the worst land, it never was worth much.

6829. Hardly typical of agricultural land at all?—It would be land that was broken out of down.

6830. It would have been better if it had never been cultivated?—Very much better.

Railway rates.

6831. You buy large quantities of feeding stuffs do you not?—Yes.

6832. What port do you get them from?—Southampton now.

6833. Do you complain of the rates on feeding-stuffs now?—No, it is so short a run from Southampton. I do not think that they are excessive.

6834. But otherwise you would think from the ordinary rates on feeding stuffs that if you were some distance from the port you would suffer considerably?—Yes.

Slaughter of cattle at port of debarkation.

6835. As regards the question of the slaughtering of cattle at the port of landing, or of importing them dead, you do not think it is worth while risking the interests of the many farmers to the few who gain by wishing to have store stock?—No, that is my view.

Changes in system of farming.

6836. Then you said that the farmers were very Conservative. Do you not think that is a good deal because they have been of late years almost paralysed in anything that they have undertaken that is at all out of the common run?—I do not know.

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6837. Frightened, I mean?—I think farmers generally adhere to a system and are afraid to go out of it. A man who has been accustomed to sheep, as a rule knows nothing about cows, and is very loth to change.

Adulteration of feeding stuffs.

6838. Of course you being on a large scale can look after your own interests; but do you think that the smaller farmers have suffered very much from the adulteration of feeding stuffs?—I expect they have.

Tuberculosis.

6839. To stamp out tuberculosis, do you not think it would be better if the Act were more stringently enforced to prevent dairying being carried on in buildings that were not sanitary?—I do not know about that. We have got tuberculosis in the country in very good buildings.

6840. Do you not think that the spread of it has increased very much where the buildings are not sanitary, if the cows have to be in them in the winter?—I am not sure about that, or whether it is brought about by extreme cold without any buildings at all. I think that is as likely as not.

6841. (*Chairman.*) Do you hold any of this very poor land yourself?—Yes.

6842. How much?—Several hundreds of acres.

Description of farm.

6843. What proportion does it bear to the rest of your land?—I have got 2,000 acres of down land, or land that is laid down to grass, which I look upon as down, which I shall not break up probably; that is 2,000 acres that are down, and ought to remain down.

6844. And how much of other land?—I have 450 acres of pasture, some of which I have laid down and is good pasture, and ought never to be broken again, but as to whether I break it again depends upon what terms I can make with my landlord on leaving. Then I have 3,100 acres of purely arable land.

6845. That you would call good land?—Useful land.

6846. Then about two-fifths of your land is the poor land that you speak of?—Yes.

6847. Which you think would not bear much rent?—That is so.

6848. Can you state what is the average rent which you pay upon the 5,000 acres?—Yes, 11*s*.

Reductions of rent.

6849. And that has been reduced 50 per cent. within recent years?—I do not think my land has been reduced so much as that.

6850. Not so much?—No. When I spoke of 50 per cent., I gave the general history of the county.

6851. But take your own land?—It is barely that.

6852. Has it been reduced 40 per cent.?—It has been reduced 50 per cent. with the exception of some down and cheap land, and about 2,000 acres, around Winchester. On that I have not got such a reduction.

6853. What should you say, taking it all round, has been the reduction in your rent?—I should think perhaps 40 per cent.

Assessment to rates.

6854. Have you had the benefit of that reduction in the reduced assessments for rates?—Yes.

6855. And you cannot tell us, not having the figures before you, where your aggregate rates have been reduced or not?—No, I have not that information.

6856. I presume you derive some advantage from the rates or from the reduction of your assessments?—Yes.

6857. Have you also had the advantage of the reduced assessment to the income tax?—Yes.

6858. Do you pay upon the assessment on the income tax half of your rent?—Yes.

6859. You have not taken advantage of the recent provision that the farmer may pay upon his actual profits?—No.

6860. You are aware of that, I presume?—Yes. A farmer's accounts are so difficult to keep; it is impossible for him to show a satisfactory balance-sheet. I mean a balance-sheet that will satisfy the Commission.

6861. I presume you would know at the end of the year whether you have made a profit equal to half the rent or not, would you not?—Yes; all that is very difficult to find out, because the condition of your farm one year makes an enormous difference.

6862. You have not at all events availed yourself of that provision?—No.

6863. And you have paid the tax upon half your rent?—Yes.

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6864. And you have had the benefit therefore of the reduced assessment?—Yes.

Reduced labour.

6865. Then, I think, you have also said that you had an advantage in the reduction of labour of 25 per cent. in quantity and in wages?—Yes.

6866. Could you say how much of that is due to reduced quantity and how much is due to reduced wages?—In my case almost all to the reduced quantity. I have not altered my wages.

6867. Therefore the 25 per cent. is wholly due to reduced quantity?—Yes.

Prices of feeding stuffs and foreign barley.

6868. I presume also you have had some advantage from reduced prices for feeding stuffs?—Yes.

6869. And your foreign barley was available to feed your cattle?—Yes.

Dairying.

6870. Now, I think, you said you took up dairy farming some time ago?—Yes.

6871. When did you take that up?—About 12 years ago.

6872. Have the prices there been much reduced?—Yes, until this year.

6873. Until this year?—And now we have got a higher price for milk than we have ever had, in consequence of the shortness of forage.

6874. Apart from this year, what has been the reduction in the prices of milk?—Sometime like 1½*d.* an imperial gallon on the milk.

6875. What per-centage is that?—It is something like a seventh.

6876. About 17 per cent.?—Yes, something like that, I should think.

6877. Has it on the whole been a profitable business?—I think it has. It works in this way: I dairy 200 cows. I have always 200 cows in full milk, and I rear all their offspring, so I have something like 700 or 800 head of cattle on my own farm always of my own breeding.

6878. The reduction there has been about 17 per cent.?—On milk.

6879. But still not so great as to destroy the profit?—No, but the great loss is upon my stock; that is worth about half now what it was. All these cattle are worth about half what they were three years ago, and my implements and all those things are only worth half what they would have been estimated at two or three years ago.

6880. I am now trying to make out what has been the result upon your profits. That, of course, is affected to a large extent by the reduction in value of your capital stock?—I suppose it would, because if you made out a balance-sheet and were to value all you had as to whether they had increased a hundred pounds or shortened by a hundred pounds, or as to whether they were worth as much again, I think that would make all the difference.

6881. It makes some considerable difference, but still in your dairy business the profit and loss would depend upon the annual receipts?—Yes.

6882. And I presume that it is in consequence of dairy farming that the rent upon your land near Winchester has been maintained?—I do not quite see that, because nearly all the grass land there is artificial, it is what I have made myself. It was all arable land when I took it 20 years ago, with the exception of a little water meadow.

6883. And you have turned it into grass land?—Yes.

6884. Do you send your milk mainly to Winchester, or is it to London?—London chiefly.

Tribunal for fixing rent.

6885. Are you in favour of any tribunal for fixing the rent between landlord and tenant?—No, I think not.

6886. You are not?—No.

6887. Has that question been mooted in your district by farmers?—No.

6888. Has there been no movement in that direction?—No.

6889. And you yourself are not favourable to it?—No, I think certainly not.

6890. Will you state your reasons?—I think it is like everything else—it ought to be ruled by the law of supply and demand.

6891. You have found yourself able to make a bargain with your landlord?—Yes, I think we can fairly deal with each other.

Leases and agreements.

6892. Have you held under leases yourself?—Yes, in several instances.

6893. But mainly by yearly tenancy?—I should think most of my land is on lease.

6894. Have the leases expired during the last 10 years?—Yes.

6895. Have you renewed them?—I have renewed them at reduced rents.

6896. Taking a lease again?—No, in the renewal I have not taken leases.

6897. You have not?—No, I have no longing for a lease.

6898. You have no longing for a lease?—No, there is a strong feeling in our country that we do not want leases. We are afraid of the future.

6899. As leases fall in, the land is renewed on a yearly tenancy?—Yes, there are no fresh leases.

6900. That I presume is on account of the uncertainty as to the future?—That is it.

6901. (*Mr. Dalton.*) If you have only had a yearly tenancy how do you get that arrangement with the landlord by which you have freedom of dealing with your land, except in the last two years; how is that practically managed?—In this way: if I feel I was going to leave I should get my land into proper condition.

6902. But you would not be compelled to give two years' notice?—No, most of mine is on one year's notice.

Tenants' capital.

6903. (*Chairman.*) You must have a very large capital employed in your business?—Yes.

6904. I do not know whether you would mind one asking how much?—I used to think I had a large capital, but if I come to look for things now, I cannot find the money I want and expect.

6905. Of course the capital value has been considerably reduced?—Yes, years ago the occupation I have, stocked in the way it is, would have been worth 40,000*l.*, but I do not think it would be worth more than 25,000*l.* now. Steam engines of Fowler's make used to cost 2,000*l.* I have got four of those double sets. I gave 2,000*l.* for two lots. The other day I bought a set as good as my own, double 14-horse engines, plough, scarifier, ropes, large van for 250*l.* in perfect working order. They had cost 2,000*l.*, that is the way in which our capital has tumbled down.

Advantages to those commencing farming.

6906. Any person with capital going into farming now would have all the benefit of that?—He would.

6907. He would have the very low prices?—Certainly. I think that is the greatest inducement for keeping on, or for taking on.

6908. (*Lord Cobham.*) You are only speaking of your farming stock, I suppose, not tillages?—Only farming stock, tillages would be valued at the same price.

6909. (*Chairman.*) I think you said that good land even now would let?—Yes.

6910. And that farmers would be found with capital prepared to take the land?—Yes.

6911. I presume that this very low price of stocking a farm has something to do with that?—Certainly; it induced me to take another farm this Michaelmas.

6912. That induced you to do so?—It did.

6913. Therefore any farmer coming in now with capital would have the great advantage, not only of very low rents, but of stocking his farm at a very low price?—Yes.

6914. That may probably to some extent account for the fact that good land can still be let?—Yes.

6915. And that farmers are still ready with capital to enter the business?—Yes, they still have hope.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. Charles Prentice Tebbutt called and examined.

6916. (*Chairman.*) You are an owner and occupier of land in Huntingdonshire, I believe?—I am.

6917. You are also manager of a private bank at St. Ives in the county?—Of a branch of a private bank.

6918. What extent of land do you own?—I own with my family about 800 acres.

6919. How much do you occupy yourself?—About 500 acres.

6920. You have therefore had considerable experience?—Yes, it is not all my own that I occupy, but most of it is.

6921. Is the depression among the agricultural interest severe in your district?—It is very severe.

Reduction of rents.

6922. Have rents been largely reduced?—Yes, they have been largely reduced; I think on the average 40 to 50 per cent., but varying a good deal, some more, some less.

6923. According to the quality of the land?—According to the character and the quality of the land; the worst land of course has had the largest reduction.

6924. When did these reductions begin?—They have been going on slowly and gradually during the last 10 or 12 years.

6925. Did they begin immediately after 1879?—There was of course a considerable amount of depression in 1879; I think the reductions in the value of rents began shortly after that.

6926. 1878 and 1879, if I recollect aright, were very bad years?—1879 was a very bad year.

6927. For production?—A very bad year indeed.

Bad seasons and low prices.

6928. The depression then was largely due to bad harvests as well as to low prices?—1879 was a particularly bad season, particularly in our neighbourhood and all through the fen country. I am on the edge of the great level of the fens, and in that district it was an extremely unfavourable year.

6929. Taking the interval since then has the depression been mainly due to low prices, or to bad harvests?—I think mainly to low prices; this year the harvest is a very bad one indeed.

6930. Last year it was very bad?—Last year the harvest was a very bad one, except in the fen country, where it was not universally a bad one.

6931. And this year has it been bad in the country?—I beg your pardon, the last harvest was not a bad one in the fen country, but it was a very bad one indeed in all the country adjacent to it.

6932. You are speaking of this year?—Yes; of the harvest of this year.

6933. The previous year was a bad one for the district, was it not?—No, I do not think it was a specially bad one; I do not think the harvests have been bad up to this year as a general rule since 1880. Stock has fallen very much in value of course during the last year or two.

6934. That I suppose has been also due to the drought of the last year?—I do not know that the fall in stock has been due to that, I should be inclined to think it has been due to the very large imports of foreign meat. I daresay the drought might have had some effect possibly.

Remedies for depression.

6935. Now what do you consider the possible remedies?—The principal hope that I have for the future does not lie in the direction of any Government interference, but in the capacity of the occupiers and owners of land to adapt their bargains and their methods of cultivation to the changed circumstances. I feel that strongly, for this reason, that 30 or 40 years ago it was undoubtedly the feeling of farmers generally that they could not produce wheat to a profit under 7*s.* or 8*s.* a bushel. Gradually that price went down to, say, 6*s.* a bushel, and now the price of wheat has gone down to 3*s.* 6*d.* a bushel. The rapidity of the change has been so great that it has been too difficult a problem for the capacity of the farmers and of the landlords to grapple with. But even now I find that the farmers generally acknowledge that if they could get 5*s.* they could keep the land in cultivation, although 30 or 40 years ago they would have thought it impossible. So I hope, and I think it is the only hope really of any improvement, that the capacity of owners and occupiers of the land if they are fairly and properly dealt with may ultimately bring about some degree of prosperity again.

6936. I do not quite understand what you mean by the capacity of the owners and occupiers?—I mean this, that at the present time farmers can get a profit with a much smaller price than they could have done 40 years ago, the increase in knowledge of the adjustment of their methods to the circumstances, and the increased knowledge and capacity that they have had enabled them to do this. I think that the increased knowledge will continue. I think that 20 or 30 years hence the cultivation of the soil will be understood in some respects better than it is now, and so I hope that the progress of improvement may meet this tremendously heavy fall.

6937. Is that by better methods of production?—Yes, either by producing the same crop with a greater economy, or by producing a greater crop with the same amount of cost.

6938. Coupled, I presume, with lower rents and reduced cost of cultivation of all kinds?—Yes, of course in the adaptation of the bargains I included that. A very heavy fall has taken place in rent, so heavy that certainly there could be no further fall without a great deal of the land being ceased to be cultivated.

Average rent.

6939. What should you say is the average rent now in your district?—The average rent?

6940. You told us that the average fall there was about 40 or 50 per cent.?—I think it is almost impossible to give an average rent, because the rents fluctuate from 1*s.* or 2*s.* an acre up to 40*s.* an acre.

6941. Forty shillings?—In very exceptional cases.

6942. What do you pay yourself on the average for the land you hold?—I do not hire a great deal. I hired some time ago a piece of land which has been worth 40*s.* an acre for 12*s.* 6*d.* an acre. The landlord was to pay the tithe, and it had a tithe of 8*s.* 6*d.* an acre on it.

6943. (*Mr. Little.*) How much?—8*s.* 6*d.* I said, but I ought to correct that. The commutation was, I believe, a shade over 9*s.*; but of course it would now be reduced by the 25 per cent.

Local taxation.

6944. (*Chairman.*) Now will you go further and state what you think can be done for the benefit of the farming interest?—I have heard the evidence of Mr. Stratton, and I feel with him that there is a real genuine claim for relief from unjust burdens as compared with personalty, and I think that all possible relief in that direction should be given. I think land, or what I should call capital invested in the reclamation of land, has been subjected to special burdens to a most unjust extent, and I cannot conceive any reason why a man, choosing to invest his capital in the reclamation of land, as has been done very largely in my neighbourhood, should be treated upon different principles to a man who is using his capital in trade or in other directions. But the habit of the country has been to burthen this land, which has been very often created by the capital which has been invested in it, very heavily indeed, and it certainly seems to me to be unjust.

Assessment to rates.

6945. Do you know whether tenant farmers generally have had the benefit of reduced assessments arising from reductions of rent or not?—I think that generally speaking farmers have got their assessments reduced, but I question whether they are reduced to the full extent of the reduction of rent; in some cases they are, but very often I think they are not. The assessments have, however, been considerably reduced. The county rate assessment has been reduced considerably.

Rates.

6946. Have the rates in your district been about the same?—I do not think that there has been any marked increase. Of course in villages where the school boards exist there has been a school board rate which has been an addition.

6947. But where the school boards do not exist have the rates been about the same?—I think they have remained during the last 10 years very much the same. They are larger in proportion to the rent and the assessment than they were, but I think the gross amount has been very much the same. I do not think there has been any increase in the rates.

6948. Taking it as so many shillings in the pound, has the rate per pound increased or not?—I am not in a position to answer that definitely, but as the assessment has considerably decreased I imagine that the percentage in the pound has increased.

6949. One would like the facts upon that point?—I am afraid I cannot give them.

6950. Of course it makes a great difference whether the percentage in the pound has increased or not?—Yes. Of course the percentage in the pound would increase if the assessment were decreased.

Assessment to rates.

6951. If over the whole union that was the case?—Yes, and that is the case over the whole union. The whole union assessment has largely decreased. I happen to have in my bag here a book which will show the decrease on the county rate. I think it was about one-fourth.

6952. That would be very interesting if you can give it to us?—The county rate was assessed in 1881 at 545,952*l.*, and in 1891 it was assessed at 396,423*l.*

6953. That is about 20 per cent.?—Yes, but a considerable reduction has taken place in the assessments of the parishes since that time, although the county rate assessment may not have been changed. The county rate assessment, of course, does not necessarily follow the changes of the local assessment, it is only done at intervals.

6954. Still if the rents had been reduced 50 per cent., and generally assessments on farm lands have been reduced in proportion, the figures that you give for the county would show that the total assessment of the county has not been reduced in the same proportion, and that therefore other property must contribute in somewhat larger proportion than it did?—I am speaking of the 50 per cent. reduction in the rental down to the present time, but a very considerable reduction has taken place within the last two years since this assessment in 1891. It is also true, no doubt, that there are towns and property in the county where it has not been reduced; houses and places and so on, in the same proportion, although it has been reduced to some extent.

6955. You cannot tell us what the rate in the pound has been for 1891 for the county as compared with the towns?—I am sorry to say I cannot.

Rates.

6956. Perhaps you could fill that up when you get the proof of your evidence?—I do not know I am sure. I should think I could, but that is a complicated matter. It includes grants in aid, and there have been important changes. The poor and the general rates I should think have been from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* in the pound.

6957. And have remained at about that rate?—I suppose they are now probably a little higher; they would be a little higher in consequence of the change of the assessments, but that is about it.

Tithe.

6958. Then with regard to the tithes, what is your view upon them?—With regard to the tithes there are such a number of flagrant instances that have come across my notice that it seems to me that there is some reasonable claim for any possible adjustment of tithes. I mentioned just now that I had hired a field for 12*s.* 6*d.* an acre which had a commuted tithe of 9*s.* or a little more than 9*s.* upon it. Such cases could be multiplied in considerable number. I heard of a farm some time ago which was let for 5*s.* an acre, the landlord paying tithe, the tithe being 4*s.* to 4*s.* 6*d.* It appears to me in such cases that there is a call for some reasonable adjustment. It cannot have been the intention that such a state of things should exist.

6959. You think that where the tithe forms anything like the same proportion to the real rent of the land there should be a re-adjustment?—I think there should. Of course there was some re-adjustment possible under certain contingencies in Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's Bill that he brought in, but it was fenced round in such a way that practically I should think probably not half-a-dozen men in England have been enabled to take advantage of it, and I think it was utterly inadequate to meet the cases which have arisen. The principle was admitted in that Bill that there should be in some cases some adjustment.

6960. Then with regard to the law of distress, have you any opinion upon that subject?—Perhaps I may venture to say with regard to the tithe question, to return to that again for a moment, that I entirely agree with Mr. Stratton's evidence as to the averages not being on a thoroughly sound principle. At the time the tithe computation was effected it was the habit and practice of farmers to sell not only what is called their head corn, but also all their tail, or inferior corn. It all came into the market; 40 years ago, almost every farmer who offered a sample of wheat in the market, offered the head corn, and he offered so many quarters of the tail corn, and the miller bought that too. At the present time none of the tail is offered in the market. Consequently at that time it was the practice that the averages were taken not only on good corn sold in the market, but also on inferior corn. At the present moment there is no such thing as an inferior sample of tail corn brought into the market; it is all consumed at home.

6961. It is all used for food?—It is all used for food; and in that sense the averages have become delusive.

6962. Then with regard to the law of distress?—I am sorry to go back again, but I want to say this: the tendency now is very strong indeed to lay land down to pasture. In my own parish, out of 1,780 acres of arable about 450 or 460 have been laid down to pasture. Upon the pasture the tithe at the time of the computation was far less valuable than it was upon the arable, and the effect of the present state of things is that it is burdening pasture land where the gross produce is very small with a tithe which never would have been realised under the old system before the commutation took place.

6963. If that land had been laid down at that time in grass the tithe would have been very much less?—It would have been very much less.

6964. You think that a re-adjustment ought to take place in accordance with the change which has taken place?—I think some re-adjustment should take place.

Law of distress.

6965. Now will you go on to your next point, the law of distress?—I gave evidence before a Committee, of which Mr. Goschen was chairman, with regard to the law of distress, and an alteration was made as a consequence of the recommendation, I think, of the Committee. That alteration, I think, provided that there can be only a distress for one year instead of for six years. I think in principle the law of distraint is wrong, but I do not think that at the present time its abolition would have any practical effect at all.

6966. Then why do you think it wrong?—I think it was wrong because I think it gave the landlord a preference which was not good for him, and which enabled him when there was great competition for land to accept inferior men, because of the security which he possessed, and I think that so it had a tendency to lessen the application of capital and skill to the land.

6967. Then why do you think a change in the law now would not produce any effect?—Because I think at the present time tenants are able to make their own terms with their landlords, and that they are masters of the situation, and not the landlords.

6968. I do not quite see how that is an argument against making the change, do you think the law a bad one?—I quite agree with the proposition that I can see no principle upon which the law of distraint could be maintained, but at the same time I am quite sure that its abolition under present circumstances would have no beneficial effect.

6969. It would have no immediately beneficial effect you mean?—That is so.

6970. I presume that when things changed somewhat and prosperity has returned then the same arguments you have used would apply again?—They would do so.

6971. That landlords would again be induced to accept tenants whom they would not otherwise select, and in that way an undue competition would exist for farms again?—The law of distress operated principally injuriously, not with regard to the owners of large estates who usually fix their own moderate rents, but with regard to the owners of small properties who being under the protection of the law of distress when things were prosperous did as I believe get an unduly high rent from a very bad tenant, and that also to the injury in the long run both to themselves and to their tenant.

6972. I suppose when the tenant is in possession it is to some extent a protection to him against the claims of other creditors?—When the tenant is in possession?

6973. Yes?—I think so far as it is a protection I should rather have said a protection to the landlord perhaps than to the tenant, but so far as it is a protection I am bound to say I do not think it is a just protection; I am bound to admit that it is an injustice to the other creditors.

6974. Would not the effect of abolishing the law of distress be that the landlords would be more strict in claiming their rent?—Quite so. But they would be able to get their rent from a good tenant, and the consequence would be that they would be obliged to take very great care that a tenant had plenty of capital, although just at the present moment no doubt it might lead to some exceptional difficulties.

6975. That is what I am rather alluding to, whether there might not be the same difficulty at the present moment, when tenants generally do not find it easy to pay, and whether the effect would not be to induce the landlords to press immediately for their rents?—I think it would do so.

6976. Therefore it might not be a wise thing to do at the present moment?—I think so.

6977. I was only trying to lead you to that point?—Quite so. At the same time I think the principle of the law of distraint is not a sound one.

6978. You would not abolish it immediately?—I should not urge it as a remedy for the present depression.

Sale of land.

6979. Then with regard to the sale of land, do you think further measures should be taken for facilitating the sale of land?—I constantly hear it stated very truly that the sale of land ought to be very free, and made so, and that persons should be encouraged to buy it. When persons buy a piece of land there are stamp duties and taxes charged upon them. If I am buying consols I do not find these duties, and I cannot understand why it can be a wise or a proper thing to put taxes on the transfer of land or on the mortgage of land. It seems to me that they are unsound in principle altogether.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

6980. Then with regard to the questions of land tenure and of compensation as between landlord and tenant, what have you to say?—I am entirely opposed to all legislative interference in the matter. I believe that the Agricultural Holdings Act, instead of doing any good, has done a great deal of harm in the country, and I think that the more you leave the landlord and tenant at liberty to settle their own affairs in their own way the better.

6981. In what way has it done harm?—We have heard that persons have been encouraged to go into court and expend a great deal of money in legal expenses. Incidentally very curious results have come across my notice several times. Some time ago the period for which legal notice was necessary for leaving a farm was extended from six months to twelve months. I forget when it was done.

6982. It was done under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I dare say it was; it was under Mr. Disraeli, I think. I have no doubt that that was done with the best intention and for the supposed interests of the tenants. As a matter of fact, I have come across repeated instances in which poor fellows have been obliged to hold on to their farms in consequence of that, and have been ruined. They were not aware of the change, the fact had not come home to them. They supposed that the old six-months' notice was all that was necessary, and they held on after the Christmas or until the New Year came, intending to give notice to leave, but they had been unable to do so, and then they were obliged to stick on to their holdings where they had hard landlords.

6983. That seems to imply an ignorance of the law on their part?—Quite so. I merely mention that as one of the things which came across my notice.

6984. I do not quite understand in what respect you think the Agricultural Holdings Act was defective; was it defective in so far as it insisted upon certain claims for compensation between landlord and tenant?—I think the objectionable part of it was in making it compulsory. I think before it was made compulsory it was an excellent Act, because it held up a standard which either party could agree to. But directly it became compulsory it seems to me that it led, from my point of view, to evil instead of good. I am always in favour in all these matters of leaving the landlord and tenant to make their own bargains, and to construct their own arrangements, and I believe they can do that better than the State can do it for them.

6985. But the Act only provides the minimum, and leaves landlords and tenants to make any bargain beyond that?—Quite so, it does.

6986. In that respect it does not differ much, does it, from the customs of the country except that it supplies a general law in place of custom?—A singularly able witness before you to-day said that he does not understand it, and that he believes the people generally do not understand it. I have no doubt whatever that it has led to a great deal of litigation and has done, I believe, a great deal more harm than good, except in so far as in the early stages before it was made compulsory, I think it had a good tendency then in leaving landlords and tenants to make wiser arrangements between themselves.

6987. If I recollect aright, when it was not compulsory landlords gave notice that they would contract themselves out of it?—They did, and very wisely I think. They made very much fairer arrangements with their tenants very often than the law provided. I think that has been the great benefit of it, that landlords generally contracted themselves out of it before it was compulsory. They generally then made arrangements of a wise and sensible character, some of which I have seen, and which have come before me. I believe landlords and tenants can always make much better arrangements between themselves than the law can make for them.

6988. If I recollect aright those arrangements generally were not so favourable to the tenants as those provided under the Act?—Of course sometimes it might be so. In many cases that have come under my notice they were more favourable.

6989. When they were more favourable they would still hold good under the Act as they would now; is that not so?—Yes; I have no more to say on that than that I think the actual operation and working of the Agricultural Holdings Act has been what I expected it would be when the State undertook a matter of so delicate a kind, and one which requires so many considerations. I think it has been a great failure, and I think the fact that we are perpetually hearing that it is being tinkered and amended is a very strong proof of that fact.

School attendance.

6990. The next head of your evidence is with reference to the school attendance of the children of agricultural labourers. What have you to say to that?—I have observed with regard to the boys on a farm that if lads are kept too long at school before they go on to a farm they never become farm labourers, they lose interest in farming matters, they get at an age at which they have a tendency to go away from the village and they get away from it altogether. I made a great effort at the time compulsory attendance was enforced to obtain a half-time system beyond 10, which, I think, should exist, so that boys should have a taste and a knowledge of farm work and should not be kept away till too late a period. Of course I am aware that as a matter of fact boys can get away at 10, and they have, many of them, done so. After this year I believe they will not be able to leave school until they are 11, but under some circumstances if they do not happen to pass certain standards which country boys sometimes cannot pass they may be kept in until they are 13 or 14, to their own great detriment and to the great nuisance of the school, and, I think, to the great injury of themselves during life.

Rural depopulation.

6991. Has there been much reduction in the number of labourers in your district?—The population in my parish—there are two villages in it—has come down from 1,500 to about 1,000.

6992. As much as that?—Yes.

6993. Is that in consequence of so much of the land being laid down in grass?—Partly, no doubt, not entirely, but partly.

6994. And partly also from farmers employing less labour?—Partly no doubt from the farmers employing less labour. I see that the population has come down in Huntingdonshire from 59,491 to 54,969.

Wages.

6995. What has been the run of wages; has the rate of wages fallen, or what?—The rate of wages has very slightly fallen lately, but the rate of wages up to a very short time ago was maintained exceedingly well and is a very great deal higher than it was 30 or 40 years ago.

6996. When did the fall begin then?—I do not think there had been much fall until two or three years ago.

6997. What has been the rate of fall?—The rate of wages now in my villages, that is the nominal winter's rate, has been 11*s*. a week.

6998. What was it three years ago?—Three years ago I think it was 12*s*.

6999. 12*s*.?—I think there was one year when it went to 13*s*., but I do not think it kept to that all the winter. There has been practically a very small fall in wages indeed. To show the rise in wages which undoubtedly is one of the causes of rise in the cost, one of our difficulties, I may say that 50 years ago I was on a farm, and the gentlemen to whom the farm belonged called their labourers together and asked them what they thought was a fair wage to be paid to a working man. The men at that time said they ought to have the value of a bushel and a half of wheat a week. At that time the price of wheat was 8*s*. a bushel, so they thought 12*s*. was a fair wage. At the present moment the labourer instead of receiving a bushel and a half of wheat a week, is receiving more than three bushels of wheat. I merely mention that as an illustration of the fact that wages have steadily risen, and so far that has been the one satisfactory thing.

7000. When you take into account the prices, that is?—When you take the prices into account.

7001. Receiving the same amount of money, they must be better off?—Quite so. I have known times since I have been farming when wages have been down to 8*s*. a week, but that was some 20 years ago.

Bank loans to farmers.

7002. (*Lord Vernon.*) Would you tell us, please, whether the farmers in your part of the world are much in debt—I suppose having to do with a bank you would know?—Of course it is rather a difficult question to answer. Considering the extraordinary fall that there has been in the price of grain and produce, I think it is marvellous how well the farmers have stood it, but at the same time of course the farmers are very poor.

7003. I mean do they make many loans?—Do they borrow money?

7004. Yes?—I think they used to borrow more money 30 years ago than they do now, because the banker is more unwilling to lend now than he was at that time.

7005. What sort of rate of interest do they have to pay for money?—They usually pay 5 per cent.

Law of distress.

7006. Would you tell me one other thing. You were talking about the law of distraint. I suppose you have realised that if the law of distraint was abolished the tenants would have no credit from the landlord; they now pay months after the rent is due?—If you ask me my personal opinion, I think that is purely a matter between the landlord and the tenant. I do not see why we should make a law to enable a landlord to give credit to a tenant. The landlord if he pleases to make himself safe, can make a provision if he likes that he should be paid beforehand.

7007. That he will be paid ready money?—Yes, he can demand that if he pleases, and I personally do not see any reason why the law of distraint should interfere with the ordinary methods of making bargains between a landlord and tenant any more than between a buyer and seller of anything else. That is my own personal view.

7008. It would be to a certain extent a disadvantage to the tenant in that way if the law of distraint was done away with?—That would depend upon circumstances. Suppose I were a tenant with plenty of capital and skill, and that I were bidding for a farm, and that another tenant with less capital and less skill —or less capital at any rate—were bidding against me, I should think it a disadvantage that that should exist.

7009. But still the tenant would get no credit from the landlord then—he would have to pay him ready money?—He would get the same kind of credit, I suppose, as an ordinary man of business gets now. You will find that although a cake merchant has no preference of payment over another creditor, yet he gives ordinary credit to the farmer when he sells him articles, and so I daresay the landlord if he trusted a man and knew that he was a respectable man would give him a certain amount of credit. I quite admit that it would lessen the motion for giving credit, and I do not wish for a moment to urge that as any remedy for existing distress.

Fall in prices.

7010. (*Mr. Everett.*) I suppose you would consider taking your district as a whole that the fall in prices has been a very great calamity to the district?—A very great calamity indeed.

Local taxation.

7011. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think you said that you thought capital invested in the reclamation of land in your district ought not be subjected to the burdens it has borne? —I think so.

7012. You have some heavy drainage and embankment rates, I think, in Huntingtonshire?—We have.

7013. But those are practically simply levied for the improvement of land, are they not?—I did not address my remarks in the slightest degree in regard to them. I think they are perfectly just, and they are private matters. I was speaking of public burdens.

7014. You simply mean the other local rates?—Yes, the general local rates.

7015. If a man invests his capital in building house he then is subject to the same burden?—He is, exactly, and the injustice remains with him just as it does with the special burden on the land.

7016. And the man who invests it in the making of a railway would be in the same position?—He would to some extent.

7017. To a greater extent, I should imagine, than a man who invests his money in the reclamation of land, would he not? I should have thought so, because he would add more to the value?—Not anything like in proportion to the amount of his outlay of capital. I should think his outlay of capital could bear a very much larger burden than the rates which would be put on his outlay on a railway, because the land is after all only a very small portion of that.

7018. But the land is rated in proportion to the profits of the railway?—Yes, it is, I am quite aware of that, and so far it is a just remark that that particular kind of personal property is rated, and so far it is a proof, I should say, that all other personal property ought to be brought under the same conditions.

7019. But what is the personalty that you think escapes when it is spent in the improvement of any kind of property in England?—We will say, for instance, all kinds of property which is charged to the income tax.

7020. Railways are charged to the income tax. If you take the schedule, will not you find nearly all such property as canals, gas works, waterworks, cemeteries, and so forth rated?—Yes, and that is just, so far as they are rated and subject to the burdens of the rates, but the proportion in which they are rated seems to me to be nothing at all comparable to the proportion in which land is rated.

7021. What I mean is this, in all these cases you take a simple piece of agricultural land and lay out a certain amount of capital upon it on which you are rated in proportion to the enhanced value in the same way as in the case of the land which you say is reclaimed. What is the kind of personal property that you complain of escaping?—Take, for instance, one large mass of personal property, the whole of the money invested in the shares of the joint stock banks of England. Suppose that I and a number of other persons invest our moneys in establishing a bank and receive our dividends from it, so far as I know we pay nothing at all to the local rates of the country except the rating of the bank in this place or in that place where the bank has an office. But if we employ our money as money has been employed in the case of the Fen country in the reclamation of a swamp and in reclaiming a vast tract of land, then we are charged on its full annual value.

7022. Then those would be the only kinds of personalty?—All kinds of personalty. I am not expressing my opinion for the present moment as to the policy of doing it, but the equitable thing would be that just as all property is assessed to the income tax, so should all property be assessed to the poor rate.

Tithe.

7023. You were proposing that there should be a readjustment of the tithe, I think?—Yes.

7024. I am not quite clear what you intended. Do you mean that where there is too high a tithe on one land and too low on another, you should take it off one land and put it on to the other, or merely that the tithe should be reduced where it is too high?—I think that it is evident that in the spirit of the Commutation Act there could not have been any intention for such relations to exist between tithe and rent as do exist at the present moment. Practically tithe in some cases is now taking all the surplus and I think that cannot be right. I acknowledge the difficulty of the case, and I think that the relief that was provided in certain cases in the Bill that was brought in by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was an indication of the direction in which such legislation should go. It did not go anything like far enough to afford any real relief.

7025. That would be merely in the direction of reducing the tithe?—Quite so.

7026. Where the land has gone up in value since the Tithe Commutation was placed upon it, you would not propose to increase the tithe upon it?—I should have thought that such cases were not to be found.

7027. You merely go for the reduction?—Where there are such flagrant cases as these.

7028. You mentioned readjustment, but that is merely a diminution?—Yes, it is so.

7029. (*Mr. Little.*) Your county is purely rural?—Yes, purely rural.

7030. You have not got an urban population of 5,000 anywhere in the county, have you?—No, but we have altogether.

7031. I mean no one place containing such a population?—No, we have not.

7032. Therefore your county rate is assessed almost entirely upon agricultural land?—Very largely.

Drainage rates.

7033. You have had great experience and you have a great knowledge of the system of the drainage of the fens?—Yes.

7034. You have been for 30 years to my knowledge a member of one of the largest drainage boards and one of the largest taxing authorities in that part of the country?—That is so.

7035. The rates that they levy are a very heavy burden upon the land and take a considerable part of the rent in many instances?—They are large.

7036. I suppose in some cases your drainage rates and the district drainage rates would come to as much as 12*s.* an acre?—To quite as much as that.

7037. That represents capital which has been expended by the owners of the land in reclaiming the land?—That is so, or in improving it.

7038. The process of improvement has been going on for a couple of hundred years, but there has been a very large expenditure in the present century?—A very large expenditure, an expenditure so large that it is far beyond the present value of the land.

7039. That is what I was coming to; would you say the present value of the land is entirely the production of capital applied in improvement?—Yes, absolutely.

Local taxation.

7040. I understand that you argue as to the burdens upon the land that this money sunk in improvements should be treated just the same as personalty?—Exactly so.

7041. You do not agree with the theory of hereditary burdens upon land, that land having once had a burden imposed upon it should under all circumstances bear that burden?—No, that argument that because land has had a certain burden upon it, and has been bought and sold appears to me to be an absolute fallacy. If the charge were an injustice when I bought the land I bought it with the right to expect that this injustice should be remedied just as when a person bought 40 years ago a house with the window duty on it, it was not said we will not have the window duty taken off because houses have been bought by the present owner with the window duty on them, but it was regarded as a matter of justice or right, and if it was right it was to be repealed, and it was repealed.

7042. Then I understand you to argue that the owner and occupier of land have a fair claim to have their share of the burden adjusted under the altered circumstances?—I think so.

7043. As to the particular way in which the adjustment should be made, I do not think you have given us your opinion?—No.

7044. Whether by subvention or otherwise?—I have not. I quite recognise the great difficulties which have been pointed out in the charging and getting at personal property, although they seem to be overcome in the income tax and therefore it is, I suppose, that the principle of giving some subventions has been adopted and I think most justly and properly.

School rate.

7045. I should just like to ask you about one rate that you mentioned, the school rate, would you relieve only those districts that have a rate for schools or would you relieve all districts from the burden of education?—In my own parish we have no school board. I cannot say that I have thought a great deal about it, but it always seemed to me very obvious that a new charge upon a parish for school purposes ought not to be made upon the same principle as an ordinary rate, because I see no reason why a farmer who happens to reside in it and who may not be so well able as his neighbour, the doctor or the lawyer or what not, should pay more towards these schools than the others. I have never understood it.

7046. You argue that education is a national object?—The nation has undertaken it.

7047. It is not specially for the benefit of occupiers and owners of land?—Certainly not.

7048. As a matter of fact it rather injures them for the time?—They may rejoice to see the children benefited or otherwise as they may think best, but certainly it does them no good.

7049. It has a tendency to take away the labourer from the land?—Undoubtedly, and to raise the price of labour.

7050. Why I mentioned the school rate was because of this, would there not be an unfairness in treating those parishes which had established their own system of education without a rate before 1870 in a different manner from those parishes which had to be forced into adopting measures for education; the parish which provided itself with its own schools and had kept them up by a voluntary subscription is as much entitled to relief as the parish which provides education by the rates?—Quite so.

7051. If a large landowner builds a school and provides school and school-house and no rate is necessary, surely that parish should not be taxed to help another parish where nothing had been done?—I suppose the answer to that would be that if the parish which has a school board is relieved of the rate the parish which has no school board ought to have a larger grant in proportion in order to make it stand upon a level with the school board parish which is relieved.

Local taxation.

7052. I was not referring to any particular scheme, but you think that these burdens upon the land are excessive, and that they ought to be lessened?—As compared with a great deal of property which so far as I can see ought equally to pay burdens on land and realty generally, amount to something like 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* in the pound income tax in addition to the ordinary income tax.

Tithe.

7053. You spoke of a reasonable adjustment of tithe; in your opinion has the Act of 1891 been at all operative?—I think not at all. I think it was a very great failure.

7054. In cases which might arise in your neighbourhood it would be inoperative; for instance, if you had a drainage rate of 12*s.* an acre and a tithe of 3*s.* an acre you would have an income tax assessment of 15*s.*?—Yes.

7055. And the tithe not being two thirds of 15*s.* the landlord would get no relief?—Quite so.

7056. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) I think you said it was your opinion that increased knowledge of the subject would help very much, you hoped, in the future to the bettering of agriculture; would that extend to the labouring classes as well as the proprietors and the tenants?—I confess I was thinking mainly of the tenants.

School attendance.

7057. You have stated here I think very clearly that in your opinion there should be less general education given to the children in rural parishes?—No, I did not state that.

7058. I understood that in your opinion from their not having compulsory attendance which I should say would lessen the education which those children receive they would be better farm labourers?—What I said was that I thought if boys were kept away until they were 13 or 14 years of age they would never gain the taste for the life of a farm labourer, and therefore it is desirable that the boys should be to some extent on a farm. I suggested half-time, certainly at as early an age as 10. I think it is desirable that a boy should be

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at work on a farm at 10 during part of the day. I made all the effort I could to get that adjustment effected at the time.

7059. Do you consider that to make reparation perhaps for the withdrawal of these children from school it might be a good thing to apply compulsory clauses in reference to technical education taught after labour hours in rural parishes?—No, I personally certainly should object altogether to all compulsory clauses with regard to technical education after work. I am sorry to say that I have very little belief in what is called technical education.

7060. Even if you withdraw the children from the other education?—I believe these boys who are part of the day on the farm will learn five times as much as they will if they are engaged in classes, being taught by lecturers and others. I think it is the practical homely education which all men need for the life which they are going to lead afterwards which is of value.

7061. That I understood in my opinion was technical education, which there has been a great attempt to forward as far as it could be done in all parishes?—I have had some observation of the subject; at the same time, so far as I can see, the technical education which is now prevailing to some extent in rural districts does not touch the working classes at all.

7062. Would not the very thing that I propose be far more likely to make it touch these classes?—I should be very glad indeed that the boys should go to a night school, and should learn to read and enjoy the books that they can read, and their newspapers; but as to their obtaining any practical knowledge of farming, which will be of any use to them in after life in these evening schools, I say they will not do it at all—they will learn nothing as to their business or employment in life.

Law of distress.

7063. In reference to this law of distraint, which is, I understand, equal to our law of hypothec in Scotland which is now abolished, the custom has been since the abolition of hypothec in Scotland to make rents forehanded to a large extent,—do you think that that would be as favourable to the tenant as the present existence for a short time of the law of distraint in England?—I think it would be favourable to the well-to-do and skilful tenant, and not favourable to the more doubtful tenant.

7064. Not favourable to the man without capital?—Quite so.

7065. Although he might perhaps be quite as skilful a man as the man with capital?—I should think that just as you observe in other business generally if a man is a very industrious and skilful man, even if he has not much capital he can get credit in consequence of his skill and his industry, so I think a farmer who had small capital, but who had skill and industry, would probably obtain that which was reasonable credit under any circumstances, and I do not think we need any law to bolster up arrangements of that sort. I would simply leave that to the ordinary course of things.

Local taxation.

7066. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You have told us that you object to the idea of local rates being a hereditary burden upon land?—Yes.

7067. That you still consider them unjust, and that when dealings take place the purchaser buys the equitable relief as you describe it?—I did so.

7068. Have you any idea in any specific case how much money value is set upon the prospect of that equitable relief?—That is a question which it is utterly impossible to answer.

7069. It is not an element which enters into the state of mind of the seller or of the purchaser?—It ought to do undoubtedly.

7070. The fact is the burden is assumed to be heriditary, and likely to continue, and that transactions are entered into upon that footing?—I have no doubt persons often buy on the probability that it will decrease, and they also I have no doubt sometimes buy upon the principle that it will increase.

7071. Still as compared with other investments you could not put a money value upon the estimate of either party to the transaction?—That would depend of course upon the probabilities that you think there are of relief from the unjust burden being granted. There might very easily be cases in which you might calculate on that. I put an instance which I think of a parallel kind of a man buying a house at the time when there was a window tax upon it. He bought it subject to a window tax. My own house, for instance, had a tax of 8*l.* or 9*l.* a year upon it. I think it would have been perfectly legitimate for a man buying that to say that obviously he bought not only that house but also the hope of the probability that this window tax would be taken off, as it was taken off, without so far as I heard any statement being made that it would be unjust to take it off, because it had been bought and sold subject to it.

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7072. That would apply to the case of any tax being taken off whether it was unjust or not; at the moment there was a prospect of its being taken off. There would be a speculation upon it; and what I am desirous to ascertain now is, whether, as a matter of fact, the prospect or the hope of relief from this burden being obtained does affect the price at which property exchanges?—That seems to me to be something which rests in every man's mind. I cannot see what is in the mind of any purchaser. A purchaser would have been very wise in taking into account that the rates would probably have some subvention, as they did get a subvention from Mr. Goschen two or three years ago.

7073. Still there are some things remote and some things near, and what I am anxious to ascertain is whether this particular idea has affected the value of real property in transactions or not?—I am afraid that is a question which it is impossible for me to answer.

Tithe.

7074. Then, with regard to this question of the tithe, you stated that at the time of the tithe commutation it was the practice of farmers to sell their tail corn as well as their good corn?—Yes.

7075. But that now no tail corn is offered?—Yes.

7076. I presume you are not speaking from personal knowledge of what happened in 1836?—No, I am not, but I am speaking of what took place in 1846. I am speaking of what was the practice then, but I have no experience of the time of the Tithe Commutation Act.

7077. I just wished to know to what time your experience referred. The next question I wish to put to you is: Have you any idea what percentage of the total returns the tail corn would be?—It varied of course in different years. Very often indeed a farmer offered 30 or 40 quarters of wheat, and would bring with it a sample of five or six quarters of what was called, to use the local name, the tail or inferior corn.

7078. That was an eighth part?—That was about an eighth, and he usually sold that to the miller at about two-thirds of the price of the head—that was roughly the practice 30 or 40 years ago, say 40 years ago.

7079. What proportion would there be now?—There is never any of it at all. I do not suppose for 10 years anybody has ever seen a farmer offer two samples, the head and the tail together; he never brings the tail to market.

7080. Does that apply to barley and oats?—Yes, quite so; tail corn has as a rule absolutely ceased to be sold.

7081. Was it the practice at that time you speak of to sell the tail ends of barley and oats as well as of wheat in the way that you have described?—I should think it was. I was speaking mainly of wheat, because I have so constantly seen it done, but in oats I have often seen it done.

7082. You cannot speak about barley so much?—No, I do not know of that.

7083. My reason for asking you is, as you know, the tithe average is made up of equal parts of wheat, barley, and oats?—Yes, it is.

7084. The question would be, whether the elimination of that eighth part of the kind of sales that took place 50 years ago from one-third of the basis of the tithe average would affect the tithe very much?—I am not speaking of it as being something which will produce a great change. I am simply speaking of it as a matter of imperfection in the present method of taking the tithe averages.

7085. It is not a material thing?—I do not think it is a material thing, and I quite recognise the fact that if the same practice existed as now, there would be no grounds for my complaint; but as at the time when tithe was commuted it was the practice to sell tail corn, undoubtedly tail corn came in and increased the number of quarters on which the tithe was fixed in each individual parish.

7086. It is not a material matter?—It is not a material matter.

7087. The other thing that you suggested as a reason for revising the tithe was the fact that now a great deal more land is laid down in pasture than was the case at the time of the tithe commutation, and I suppose we may assume that to be true?—Yes.

7088. That is a fundamental change which ought to be considered and ought to be a reason for revising the tithe settlement itself?—That was my contention.

7089. Would it not be the case that there are other questions which would have to be considered in such a matter; would you say, for instance, that the gross produce of agriculture in England is less or more now than it was 50 years ago?—I should think less—distinctly.

7090. The value?—I think so; distinctly less.

7091. You have not made a calculation, however?—No; but I have no hesitation at all in stating that it is.

7092. Taking it all round?—Taking it all round.

7093. Still, suppose it had been increased and not diminished, that would be a subject which would have to be considered?—It would, no doubt.

7094. Would it not be the case also that such a change as has occurred in the great accessibility which the farmer has to markets in many parts of the country would be a change that would have to be considered, and that instead of getting the merely local price he almost gets a metropolitan price as compared with what he did 50 years ago?—I do not think that practically affects it. I think the influence of that would not be sufficient to make any appreciable effect at all.

7095. Still that is a kind of change which might have to be considered?—I do not think I see exactly why it should be considered.

7096. You say that an alteration in the mode of calculation is a thing to be considered, and I am suggesting that the accessibility to market is a thing that would have to be considered?—I was urging what I said upon the ground that the original conception of the tithe was that it was a tenth part of the produce, and that now large portions of the land are being laid down in such a state of cultivation that the gross produce is a very great deal less; indeed, not more than one-third probably what it was formerly—and that this constitutes a ground for some consideration. I do not see exactly the point with regard to accessibility to markets.

7097. I am not sure that I do not agree with you in a great many points, but I am more anxious to get your opinion exactly as to what it is. I should like to ask you this now with reference to the tithe question. You suggested that the tithe now is a much greater proportion of the rent than was contemplated when the people who settled the tithe commutation did the work?—Quite so.

7098. But there was a proposal then, I believe, that the tithe should be settled not as was actually settled, but as a proportion of the rent, and that was deliberately rejected?—Was it, indeed? It was a very great mistake on the part of the landowners of the country.

7099. I may say that I happen to know there was a great deal of discussion upon these points, but it was somewhat difficult to find out what was in the minds of those who proposed the Tithe Commutation. The suggestion that it should be upon wheat, barley, and oats was only adopted after a great deal of debate, but we have not all the debates before us as far as I know. I should like to ask whether you think that it would be possible now after the deliberate rejection of that mode of settlement 50 years ago, to go back to a proportion of the rent?—Of course it is very difficult indeed to say what is possible, but perhaps I look at tithe altogether from a different point of view to what many persons do. I look upon tithe as taxes.

7100. As in the nature of a tax?—Yes.

7101. And should be dealt with in the same manner?—Yes; of course with all due consideration for all existing interests. I think we have a most striking instance of it in this very great district of Bedford level. 250 years ago there was nothing to tithe; it was a swamp practically. Gradually a large amount of money was spent upon it, and it was brought into cultivation, and by the law of the land tithe grew up.

7102. You agree, I suppose, that there are fundamental difficulties in making a settlement of any kind so far ahead as 50 years, and that you cannot provide for all circumstances that are likely to arise?—Quite so.

7103. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) I think you farm yourself to some extent?—Yes.

Result of farming.

7104. May I ask whether your farming has been satisfactory, and whether you have made a profit?—In the last two or three years.

7105. Yes?—It has not been at all satisfactory.

7106. (*Chairman.*) But before the last two or three years?—I was not farming quite so much then. Farming is and always has been a business which makes a very small return; but at the same time it was fairly satisfactory before the present depression.

7107. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Has it been more satisfactory within the last two or three years than that of your neighbours?—That is a most difficult question to answer, I really do not think I know what to say.

Bank loans to farmers.

7108. In answer to Lord Vernon, I think you said that the bank of which you are the representative does not advance money to tenant farmers?—No, I did not say that.

7109. Did you not say that?—No. Of course I cannot say anything with regard to the particular bank that I am connected with; but probably all banks are more cautious now than they were 30 or 40 years ago, because of the very bad times.

7110. Still advances are made from time to time to farmers even in these bad times?—Yes, no doubt.

7111. (*Lord Cobham.*) You would not say you have lost more money as a banker from farmers than from other classes of the community, would you?—I should think that 30 or 40 years ago they were the safest class of men in the world to lend money to, but I should not say it has been so in the last 10 or 20 years.

7112. In your particular part of the country the depression has been very severe, I believe?—Very severe indeed.

Technical instruction.

7113. I gathered from one of your answers that you have no very high opinion of theoretical instruction in agriculture?—I am sorry to say I have not at all.

7114. Either to farmers or to labourers?—Either to farmers or to labourers.

7115. With regard to the labourers, do you not think that if they had some intelligent knowledge of principles as well as of practice it would increase their interest in their work and have a tendency to keep them in the country?—I think farm labourers have a great interest in their work and are very intelligent people indeed. I very much differ from the notion which is generally entertained of farm labourers. My experience of farm labourers is that they are a very intelligent set of men, equal to the artizans of the towns, although not equal in certain outward and superficial signs of intelligence.

7116. Do you think that that intelligence of theirs could be further developed a little by technical instruction?—I doubt that very much. The technical education which is given seems to me not to touch them at all; they do not come near it.

7117. Is that not rather because it is on the wrong lines?—I doubt the possibility of it. I do not believe in it.

7118. You do not believe that in such a complicated and scientific a business as farming theoretical knowledge superadded to practical knowledge would be useful?—I value—nobody more so—the investigations of such men as Sir John Lawes, whose farm I have often been over, and the investigations which are carried on by men of that stamp, but if you ask me whether I think a farmer is more likely to succeed because he has passed through a course of agricultural chemistry I say I should think him rather less likely to succeed; he would become theoretical instead of practical.

7119. If he had made himself acquainted from books with the results of Sir John Lawes' experiments, do you think he would be more likely to succeed?—If he went over and looked at them, he would; but it would not be from a scientific point of view, it would be as a practical man, as a practical farmer. The men who have gone through these difficult times the best have not been the theoretical farmers, they have been the practical hard-headed farmers who look at every transaction from a strictly business point of view.

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7120. Then you consider that the large sums which have been recently expended upon technical agricultural education have been wasted?—I am sorry to say that I think they have been largely wasted.

7121. You do not think that we shall have the benefit of it even in our future experience?—I am sorry to say I do not.

7122. Or that more could be done?—I think there has been a certain amount of amusement given by the lectures, and so on, which have been held in the villages, people have enjoyed the meetings, but I do not think they have produced any practical result.

Uncultivated land or land in hand.

7123. (*Chairman.*) Have any farms gone out of cultivation in your district?—A good many farms have been laid down to pasture; of course it is rather difficult to say what "going out of cultivation" means.

7124. I mean are they without tenants?—Then the landlord takes them in hand and does something with them; the Duke of Manchester had a very large amount.

7125. Has much land gone into the hands of its owners in that way?—A good deal has no doubt.

The letting of farms.

7126. When good farms are vacant is there a difficulty in getting tenants?—You can get tenants for good farms at a reduced rent.

7127. You can; you would now?—Yes.

7128. Can you find men with capital?—Fairly so, yes.

7129. You have heard, I suppose, what Mr. Stratton said about farmers coming into the possession of their farms with capital?—Yes.

7130. It requires very much less, probably 40 or 50 per cent. less capital than formerly?—No doubt, and that has been an encouragement.

7131. That widens the circle of men who can come in?—It does so no doubt.

7132. In your district is it possible for a good farm to be let at the present rents?—Rents have been varying so much you see that they have hardly settled down to a uniform scale, but it is quite possible to let a good farm in the neighbourhood at a rent; there is no question about that.

7133. I presume the farmers of the district form a large proportion of your clients at your bank?—Yes, a fair number.

Successful farmers.

7134. Are there men among them who have made money?—Yes, there is here and there a man. Of course just lately things have been very bad indeed.

7135. I do not mean within the last two years when the harvests have been bad, but up the last two years?—There have been occasionally men who have made money. There are some men with special ability who have had cheap farms and so on.

7136. That is to say, who have paid low rents?—Yes, farms at a very moderate rent; they have been capable men; there are a few such men.

7137. Do you know a few men still doing well?—Yes.

7138. (*Lord Cobham.*) On good land?—No, not necessarily on good land.

7139. (*Chairman.*) Not necessarily on good land?—Not necessarily on very good land; but they are very capable men.

7140. It is still possible that a farmer with ability, and devoting himself thoroughly to his farm, can make money?—I should have great hesitation in advising any man who was a man of ability to go into farming at the present time, I confess.

7141. Still you say your experience is that there are men who can make money at it?—Of course, now and then one meets with a man of special ability. I have one in my own mind at the present moment, I am sorry to say he is not living, who from being a bailiff gradually became a farmer. He was a specially capable man, but then he was one man in a hundred, you know.

7142. Was that by striking out into new lines, or by carefully looking after his affairs?—He was a very industrious man and a very shrewd man, he knew the value of everything, and could tell you the value of everything directly he saw it. He was fortunate also in his circumstances, as he took farms at the reduction; he just came in at the right moment when there had been a heavy reduction. On the other hand, I have known some extremely capable men indeed, and 30 or 40 years ago I should have thought them sure of making a fortune, but they have been just able to get along, and that is all.

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Wages.

7143. You said just now that some years ago the labourers considered that they were entitled to one and a half bushels of wheat per week?—Yes, that was a great many years ago, more than 50.

7144. And that now at present prices the labourer would get three bushels?—Quite so.

7145. I presume it follows that the low price of wheat and other agricultural products has been an enormous advantage to the labourer?—No doubt it has.

"Protection."

7146. I presume therefore that you would hardly contemplate artificially raising the price of the produce?—It seems to me that except in view of the increasing dependence of the country upon foreign corn, such a proposal could not be justified.

7147. Looking at it from the point of view of the labourers generally?—I think that it is quite out of the question.

7148. Then you do not look for any remedy in that direction?—I do not.

Local taxation.

7149. Then with regard to local taxation, I presume you would hold that the management of the poor must be local?—One sees the difficulty that if it all comes through the central authority, of course you must have some control by the central authority. My attempt to-day has been to show that there is a real burden, and it is perhaps hardly for me to go into the details of the way in which it is to be met. I do not think people are aware generally of the way in which capital invested in the reclamation of land is burdened as compared with other capital.

7150. Supposing that capital instead of being invested in the improvement of land is invested in the building of houses, cottages, and shops, then I presume it would pay increased rates?—Yes, it would.

7151. Is there any difference in principle between the investment of capital in that direction and its investment in the improvement of land?—I do not see any difference.

7152. Therefore whatever principle would apply to one must be applied to the other?—Quite so. What I mean is that the distinction between realty and personalty does not seem to me now to exist, and that it ought not to exist. I see no difference between realty and personalty.

7153. Practically the inherent value of the soil has almost disappeared in many districts?—Yes.

7154. And there is nothing left but the value which has been given to it by the money which has been expended upon it?—Exactly so.

7155. Does it differ much in that case from a house?—No.

7156. Or a cottage?—No.

7157. Where the whole value or nearly the whole value is derived from the money which has been expended upon it?—No; it is the same.

7158. Therefore whatever principle would apply to the one we must apply to the other?—Certainly.

7159. Take a county like your own which is mainly a rural county—I presume there are not many industries in it except that of farming—there are a certain number, but not many, I suppose?—There are some, of course.

7160. The farming interest is the main interest?—True, it is the main.

7161. There are a few banks, I suppose, like your own?—Yes.

7162. Not many manufacturers?—No, not many.

7163. Now if you pay income tax upon all property within the district in aid of the rates you would have to tax the farmers?—Yes, I suppose you would in lieu of the rates.

7164. At present the land pays the rate, and the farmer has no tax upon his capital?—In a certain sense. One sees no distinction between the way in which it would get to the landlord if it were taxed directly to the farmer than if it were in the form of rates, or any other tax. Practically, it comes to the same thing, no doubt, ultimately. These things have all a tendency after a long time to shift themselves on to the landlord.

7165. In the long run you say they fall upon the owner?—In the long run, no doubt. Of course you may have a race of men ruined in the process in the meantime, but still undoubtedly all fixed charges, or all charges of any kind, have that tendency.

7166. Taking the poor rate at the average of what it has been for a great many years that I presume is in the main now paid by the landlord?—I should think it probable, you can say it is so; no doubt about that.

7167. If you put an income tax upon all the property within the county in aid of the rates, would not the farmers have to pay income tax upon their profits as well as other trades?—I should say that would go to the landlord too.

7168. Why?—For the same reason precisely that the poor rate does; the farmer in taking possession of his farm would take that into consideration; he would say I am carrying on my business in the hope of a certain return. I see no distinction between the operation of the two processes.

7169. He would only pay the tax when he makes a profit. I suppose if you put an income tax upon all incomes within the district in aid of the local rates the person whom you call upon to pay would only pay in the event of his making a profit?—Yes. It is very difficult indeed to trace all these smaller matters to the point where they finally land themselves.

7170. I mean whether your proposal would not really land us in a further tax upon farmers?—But I do not think I made any proposal.

7171. Only I gathered from you that all property in the district ought to pay an income tax, and you specially took the case of a bank, and I think that you intimated that bankers at all events might pay?—No, I think not; what I said was that the difficulties which were mentioned as being so great with regard to personal property had been overcome with regard to the income tax. I did not propose that the poor rate should be put upon the income tax; on the contrary I said that I thought the method which Mr. Goschen adopted of giving aid to local rates was just and proper. I think that was the extent of my evidence.

7172. You do not go further than that. I only want to know if you still think the principle of subventions might be increased?—I think so, it seems to me that it ought to be increased to the utmost extent to which it is capable except some other method can be devised.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned.

Fourteenth Day.

Thursday, 15th February 1894.

PRESENT:

The RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. BARON VERNON.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.

FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary*.
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
FREEMAN THOMAS, Esq., } *Secretaries*.

Mr. ELIAS PITTS SQUAREY called and examined.

7173. (*Chairman.*) You are a member of the firm of Rawlence and Squarey, land agents, of Salisbury and Westminster, are you not?—Yes.

7174. And you have been so for a great many years?—We have practised as a firm since 1852.

7175. In what parts of the country are you principally engaged?—Our business grew wonderfully, from small beginnings at Salisbury; we were taken from the plough tail, to be made land agents. Our business ranges from Shropshire and Lincolnshire, which is our most northern limit, to Cornwall and through the Midlands.

7176. And in Wiltshire?—In Wiltshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, and Dorsetshire very largely.

7177. What counties do you specially speak of to-day?—I do not know that I have any special preference, but I shall be happy to answer questions bearing upon the Midlands, especially Lincolnshire and the great central parts of England, Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, Berkshire, and Oxfordshire.

Acreage under management.

7178. What is the amount of acreage of land that you are agents for?—I am unable to give that to you.

7179. It is very large, is it not?—Very large. That it is a considerable area is proved by the fact that we had last year nearly 15,000 acres in hand for our various clients.

7180. What counties are those in?—They were chiefly in Berks, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, partly in Warwickshire, and some part of them in Staffordshire.

7181. Are the estates that you manage for large owners or some very small ones?—Nothing is too large, nothing is too small for us.

Size of estates under management.

7182. Have you many large estates, or are they mostly small ones?—Our largest estate is about 26,000 acres—that is the largest estate that we are agents for; but we are auditors and consulting agents, for two estates of nearly 40,000 acres each besides.

7183. Where are those?—One is in Wiltshire, the other partly in Wiltshire and partly in Somersetshire.

Condition of agriculture in Wiltshire 1847-52.

7184. Speaking first of all of Wiltshire, will you state what is your experience as to the condition of things there?—The condition of things is very sad. I am impressed with the traditions of the past, having begun my professional life as a farmer in 1844, but I recognise the most grievous and serious changes in the condition of things from that period to the present. Of course, I am cognisant of the state of affairs from 1847 to 1852, a period of depression very largely affecting farming in that part of England (which I then alone knew) almost as acutely as this depression has done.

7185. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) In what years?—From 1847 to 1852.

7186. (*Chairman.*) During those five years there was very serious depression, was there not?—Very serious depression.

7187. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Was it as bad as the present?—Not so bad or continuous as the present.

7188. (*Chairman.*) That was immediately following free trade?—Yes, after the repeal of the corn laws, and free importation of meat.

7189. And until the year 1852?—From 1852 to 1853 it began to mend; the Crimean War broke out about then.

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1852–79.

7190. From 1852 to 1879 was there a period of prosperity?—Most certainly, beginning to decay before 1879 arrived.

7191. Up to what year?—Up to 1874 and 1875.

7192. Then there was a commencement of change, and that became aggravated in 1879, did it not?—Certainly; it began gradually to fall: lower and lower prices obtained.

Rent.

7193. Had rents fallen in the years 1847 to 1852?—Yes, very considerably.

7194. Was it temporarily?—Temporarily, and generally as well.

7195. Do you mean that temporarily the abatements were made only year by year, or were the rents permanently reduced?—They were not generally reduced but there was a less competition in the taking of the farms; the turn of the market was in favour of the tenant.

7196. Well, then, in 1852 the better state of things occurred; was there a rise of rents between that year and 1875?—Very considerable.

7197. What should you put the per-centage of increase at that period?—It would depend upon the platform upon which you start. Upon the platform of 1844 and 1845 the rise would have been considerable; it is difficult to say off hand what the rise was; it depended largely on the improvement of landed estates by the expenditure of capital both by landowners and tenants.

7198. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) The rise of rents began when?—The rise began in the years 1853 and 1854. It was a temporary depression. I have said that the turn of the market was in favour of the taker rather than that there was any great abatement of rents.

7199. (*Chairman.*) Up to 1852 and after 1852, you said, between that year and 1875 there was a considerable rise of rent?—Yes, there was a considerable rise of rent. There were always plenty of tenants to take farms, but generally speaking there were stipulations made by them that improvements should be made, new homesteads should be erected, drainage done, better water supplies, fencing, road making, and things of that kind. With this expenditure there was a general advance of rent beyond the usual interest on the outlay.

7200. Was that rise of rent general over the estates that you manage?—Certainly, it was general.

7201. And did not apply to only the particular owners that you are agent for?—No, it was general over the whole of England.

7202. Can you give us an idea of the measure of the rise; was it 20 or 25 per cent., or what proportion?—No, it would have been 25 per cent. from the platform of 1845 and 1846.

7203. But as compared with 1852, the year when it was reduced?—It would have been 25 per cent. certainly from the lowest point of 1852, and perhaps more, but that 25 per cent. would be subject to abatements in respect of interest on outlays made by the landlords for improvement.

Depression since 1875.

7204. Well, then, in 1875 a turn came, and in 1879 that became very serious?—1879 of course was one of the most unfortunate seasons we have ever known, singularly unfortunate, low temperature, and great rainfall.

7205. And also low prices?—Low prices concurred, aggravated by the damaged quality of the cereals.

7206. I think I am right in saying that it was almost the first time that low produce was not compensated for by increased price?—Certainly there was not any compensation by an increase of price.

7207. Generally speaking, up to that time when there was a bad harvest it was accompanied by high prices?—It always affected the prices.

7208. But in 1879 for the first time that was not experienced?—That is so.

7209. And you had very low production and very low prices?—Very low prices for very inferior produce it is fair to say.

Reduction in rents from 1875.

7210. Well, then, since 1875 I presume rents had fallen very considerably?—Yes, very largely indeed.

7211-2. Can you give us the general average, stating with regard to what kinds of properties rents have fallen most?—Averages would be very delusive. First of all the measure would be the platform upon which those averages would have to be taken. For instance, a large estate, where rents were never forced to their maximum, the per-centage of reduction is obviously less than on estates of less area where the necessity for getting the utmost penny from them has arisen; this would clearly average a larger per-centage of fall in value than would the larger estates to which I first alluded. If I may illustrate that, I would say that, given a rental of 10,000*l.* for 10,000 acres, the tenants paying the tithe rentcharge in addition, and given another estate of similar character of 2,000 or 3,000 acres, where the rental had been forced up to the maximum of 22*s.* or 23*s.* an acre, it obviously would be unfair to measure the average fall by the two estates.

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7213. Then we may take it from that, that in the case of estates where the rents have been nominal the reductions have not been so large as in the case where rents have been forced up, and the utmost penny had been obtained from them?—The per-centage of reduction is not so large from two causes: first, there is not the height to fall from down to the lower price; and, secondly, there is always a tendency on the part of the tenant to appreciate the moderately rented estates, and to be content with a less reduction than on estates where, up to that time, was demanded the extremest rack rent.

7214. Have you found much difference in the case of pasture land, and pasture farms, and arable farms?—The arable farms, of course, have been those which have been subjected to the greatest fall, but there are qualifications even necessary in that answer.

7215. And in different parts of the country?—Not quite so much in different parts of the country as in the greater richness or poverty of the lands affected.

Reduction of rent on different land.

7216. And the reduction has been less upon the good land, I presume, than on the bad land?—Very considerably less. The fact is, there are generally takers of good land even now, but not takers of the very poor and inferior lands.

7217. Could you put any average for the reduction of rent to the good arable land that you speak of?—Good arable land with an admixture of pasture—I have rather in my mind at the present time my own district——

7218. In Wiltshire, do you mean?—In Wiltshire and Dorsetshire and Hampshire, because they all coincide in their general character, where there would be usually the proportion of water meadow in the valleys. Taking a farm of 500 acres, of which 20 acres would be probably water meadow, 100 acres would be pasture, partly down pasture and partly pasture in the valleys, and the remainder would be arable.

7219. What has been the reduction there?—The reduction of rent has been from 30 to 40 per cent., depending in degree on locality, under conditions which I have referred to before.

7220. Are those what you would call the better class of properties?—The better class of properties.

7221. And with that reduction have you found no difficulty in getting new tenants?—It is a question of terms.

7222. With that reduction of rent, I mean?—With the farms ranging up to 400 to 500 acres, there is no great present difficulty in obtaining tenants with a sufficient reduction of rent on that type of farm.

7223. Now come to another class—the worst class of farms?—Do you mean the inferior?

7224. Yes?—The inferior classes of land certainly have abated very much more than that. I know of cases of extreme abatements of something like 55 per cent. I think that is the extremest amount that I know of, except under certain circumstances, which do not really bear upon the case.

7225. But 85 per cent. would be about the extreme?—Yes.

7226. What would be the average—from 45 to 50?—The average would be from 35 up to 45 per cent. But that is not a reliable average, the interval is really too wide.

Difficulties in letting large farms.

7227. And even with that reduction have you great difficulties in getting tenants?—On large farms you practically cannot get tenants. We have just succeeded in letting a farm of 1,800 acres. It has immense attractions, and I have always regarded it as being one of the finest farms in Wiltshire. It was let up to 1875 at 1,800*l.* a year, and it is now let at 1,000*l.*

7228. Have you been able to get a tenant with capital to take that?—We have.

7229. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is that an old tenant?—The old tenant died.

7230. (*Mr. Little.*) Did the old rent include the old tithe-rent?—It is tithe free.

7231. (*Chairman.*) Was it in your hands?—We had it in hand for two years.

7232. (*Mr. Clay.*) What rent did it yield then?—It was a minus—one year certainly it was a minus.

7233. How do you expect a new tenant to pay 1,000*l.* a year?—He is a much cleverer fellow than we are.

7234. (*Mr. Little.*) Did he pay the ordinary tenant right valuation on entering?—Yes, he will. The tenancy only commences from Michaelmas. He understands that. I should say that it is accompanied by some stipulations as to expenditure; moderate expenditure on buildings—nothing unreasonable at all—the farm was fairly equipped before.

7235. (*Chairman.*) Then that is rather an exceptional case of a large farm being let?—It is the only case of a large farm that we have lately let. We have other farms not quite so large as that, one of 1,600 acres, and one of 1,000 acres, and one of 1,200 acres. For these farms we have not got offers.

Land in hand.

7236. Going below that, but still large farms, have you still many unlet?—We have not posted up our lands in hand very lately, but we had in 1893 something like 15,000 acres of land in hand.

7237. Were those mostly large farms?—They were mostly large farms that we could not find tenants for at a rent which we could recommend our clients to accept for them.

The letting of small farms.

7238. Then in the case of smaller farms, have you found great difficulty in finding tenants for them?—No; just as the area decreases, so is the disposition to take farms increased.

7239. What would you call the maximum of the small farms?—From 250 to 300 acres. But still the same remark would apply to farms down to 100 acres.

7240. The lower you get the more easy to let the farms?—The more readily we can let farms.

7241. Is that because there are more men with capital sufficient to work them, or is it that they are more profitably worked as small farms?—Because there are more people who hope to get money out of land by farming in such cases than are found for large farms.

7242. Not that they are more profitably worked?—My experience is that these men do manage somehow or other to pay their rents, but they live extremely hard lives, and are economical to a degree.

7243. Then have you not much land in hand of farms of that kind?—Not of small farms.

Subdivision of farms.

7244. Have you found a difficulty in breaking up the large farms into small ones?—Practically it is a question of expenditure, and we cannot advise our clients to expend the very large sums that are necessary for breaking up 1,000 to 1,500 acre farms into three or four farms under conditions which we have been hoping and still hope are temporary.

7245. You cannot advise them to take the large expenditure which is necessary for the purpose of erecting new farm steadings in order to break up the farms under present conditions?—That has been our policy hitherto, but I may supplement that remark: our farms, as a rule, in the counties to which I am alluding do not conveniently bear division. The upper lands are, generally speaking, of the poorest and thinnest, the middle lands are fairly useful arable lands, the home lands are very nice attractive arable lands and pasture lands, and the water meadows, of course, are very desirable indeed.

7246. I gather from that that the farms have been so arranged that there is considerable difficulty in breaking them up?—That is so; they are long parallelograms for the most part, and it is obviously a difficulty to divide a parallelogram (unless you have very wide parallelograms) into convenient holdings.

7247. You said that under the present conditions you cannot advise your clients to break them up, but that you still hope that the conditions may improve?—I hope so.

7248. What is the ground of your hope?—I am of a sanguine temperament, I put it that way.

Prices.

7249. Do you hope that better prices will come?—I hope that better prices will come. I cannot conceive the continuance of such prices of cereals as those that have prevailed during the last five or six years.

Cheap distribution of produce.

7250. Have you any remedies to suggest or any opinion to give as to the remedies which have been suggested?—Well, of course, I have small remedies which I do think may be of some assistance. I venture to think that as to small occupations the necessity for the cheap distribution of produce is a very large and important factor. I mean that through the medium of the Post Office the smaller products of industry might reach the consumer direct from the producer and at a very moderate cost of carriage. I am no enemy to the middleman; I believe he is a most useful person, and must always subsist; but I am confident that for small matters, dairy produce, vegetables, and kindred matters, there is a very large opportunity for a living to be obtained by men on small farms, by cultivating them, more or less, as market gardens, if they could only be put in direct communication with those who consume.

7251. How can that be effected?—I think through the medium of the Post Office, and by the application of the system which, no doubt, is better known to you than to me, of the prepayment by the purchaser, through the Post Office, of the articles which he desires to buy. I am told that that exists in India under our rule there, and certainly it exists on the continent to a very considerable extent.

7252. I do not quite understand you as to what the process is; is it payment on delivery through the Post Office officials?—It is this: the person who orders the goods can pay at his Post Office, so that the person who sells the goods can receive the money at the Post Office at his end and conclude the transaction at once; of course plus cost of carriage.

7253. You say that the present parcel post affords facilities for the distribution of those products; but not so much facility to the payment for them as it might do?—Certainly, it implies a very large extension of the use of the Post Office.

7254. Do you think that there should be a further reduction of charge by the Post Office?—I will not venture to speak upon that, because I could be no authority upon a matter of that kind; but I think that it should be done upon the very lowest possible rates consistent with the avoidance of loss; I certainly think that is a desirable thing.

7255. There has been a great deal done in that direction?—A great deal; it is no new principle that I am suggesting.

7256. (*Mr. Elton.*) It is like a deposit account in the stores; they will open a deposit, and they have a balance?—They might do that, or simply they might say, "I want two dozen eggs to come up by parcel "post," and if they are strangers to each other the purchaser could pay the cost of the eggs and the carriage.

(*Chairman.*) And wire the 2*s.* up to London?—Yes. There was a small letter in the *Times* of Thursday referring to this very matter, which gave it more clearly than I am able to do.

7257. What other suggestions have you to make?—With reference to the question of price?

Free trade.

7258. What have you to say upon that?—I have no desire to refer to the question of protection. I was a free trader when Cobden and Bright came to Salisbury in 1847 to fight the battle of free trade there, and I and my partner were amongst the few farmers who were with them in that idea. I see no reason whatever to depart in any degree from the principles of free trade as they have been since applied, but I do ask that the produce of cereals and meat in England shall be placed on the same platform, as far as possible, with those who export from foreign countries the same articles that we produce.

The currency.

7259. With that view, what do you suggest?—I would suggest some means of dealing with the currency question between India and Russia. Of course, I am not an authority upon these matters, but it is irresistible that there is a premium offered to the export of wheat from India and Russia at the present time, through the depreciation of the rupee or rouble, which operates most adversely and unfairly, as I conceive, to the English producer.

7260. Would you apply that to Russia as well as to India?—The principle applies, though the rouble has not as largely, but very nearly as largely, depreciated as the rupee.

7261. Do you attribute some of the low prices of wheat to that difficulty?—It is scarcely possible to measure the amount of that depreciation, but I conceive it to be very considerable indeed. A friend who has relations with Indian produce, and particularly wheat, estimated it to be at something like 4*s.* to 5*s.*

per quarter. I do not know that he would vouch for that, but that was his rough estimate of it.

Beer.

7262. You think that but for that bonus, as you call it, the price of wheat would be somewhat higher?—Obviously it would. You may remember the motion that was made in the House of Representatives at Washington, where a member proposed to bring in a Bill offering a premium upon the export of all wheat grown in America, equivalent in amount to the bonus offered by the export of Indian wheat to England; it took no form, but it was a perfectly logical sequence of the system of protection in the United States.

Marking of foreign meat.

7263. Then with regard to the sale of foreign meat, what do you say?—I have no objection whatever to as much corn, meat, or other foreign produce coming in to feed the millions of England as can be brought in on a perfectly fair platform, but I do ask that what is brought into England shall be sold for what it is. If it is foreign meat it shall be declared not only by the shipper and the middleman and the butcher (and I venture to say he is not a butcher really), but that it shall be declared what it actually is to the consumer. Rightly or wrongly, the English people have the idea that they prefer English mutton, and if they do prefer it they are entitled to know whether they are buying English mutton or foreign mutton. I am not depreciating foreign mutton at all; it is very good.

7264. And you think that the butcher should be compelled to declare what it is?—I think that the vendor should be compelled to declare it, and that all parties connected with the transaction should be bound to declare it.

7265. And you would extend that also to the case of beer?—I should extend it with equal stringency to the case of beer. The fall in the price of barley has been very great, and the profits of the brewers, judging from their accounts when they are converting themselves into limited liability companies, has been very great, so great that it is quite clear that there is a hidden source of profit which did not formerly exist; I assert that the drinker of beer shall be allowed to drink just what he likes, but that he certainly shall be informed of what the beer that he is drinking is compounded. I do not ask for an absolute disclosure of the items used in the production of beer, but I do say that it shall be stated where a brewer does not brew beer only from malt and hops that he shall so declare it. I venture to put in a sheet of the "Mark Lane Express" of the 29th of January, 1894 containing a list of substitutes used by brewers, which are advertised in the brewers' papers for sale to the brewers. It is a long and troublesome list.

7266. This contains a list of articles which are used by brewers in substitution for malt and hops?—I do not say that they are used by brewers; but it is a not unreasonable conclusion that they are used by brewers, because they are advertised in the brewers' papers as things that are necessary for their business.

Tithe.

7267. Then with regard to tithes there has been, has there not, a considerable fall in the tithes since 1879?—Yes, there has been a great fall in tithes since 1879, but the fall in the averages of tithes has not been commensurate with the fall in the price of the actual produce of the farm.

7268. Is it not the fact that a difficulty arises from the tithe being calculated upon a septennial basis, and, therefore, where there is a continuous fall in price the fall of the tithe must naturally lag behind the other fall?—No doubt that aggravates the condition up to a certain point; but, if I may read a statement which I venture to put in, as an "illustration of the relative "fall in the value of cereals and tithes on a farm of "500 acres, 100 acres pasture and water meadow. Say "the tithe rent-charge is 100*l.*, equal to 4*s.* per acre. "Value of tithe in 1881 equal to 107*l.* 2*s.* 10½*d.* Assume the cereal produce to be as follows:" (and roughly I have taken the prices in 1881) "100 acres "of wheat, 28 bushels per acre at 48*s.* 4*d.* per quarter, "845*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.*; 70 acres of barley, 32 bushels per "acre at 37*s.* 10*d.* per quarter, 529*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*; 30 acres "of oats, 40 bushels per acre at 25*s.* 6*d.* per quarter, "191*l.* 5*s.* 0*d.* giving a total of 1,566*l.* 15*s.* 0*d.* "Annual average prices for 1893" (I need not trouble you with that because you know it) gives a result of 959*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* The value of the tithe in 1893 was 74*l.* 3*s.* 9½*d.* "So that the value of the "produce has fallen from 1,566*l.* 15*s.* 0*d.* to 959*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* "equal to 38·75 per cent. The tithes having fallen "from 107*l.* 2*s.* 10½*d.* to 74*l.* 3*s.* 9½*d.* equal to 30·75 "per cent.," showing a difference of 8 per cent on the fall between the value of the cereals and the amount of the tithe payable.

7269. Does not that difference arise from the fact that the tithe is calculated upon a seven years basis, and in some of the earlier years the prices were not quite so low as they are now?—It would be so; but practically if we took an average of the three years preceding 1893 the tithe rent-charge would be rather more than 74*l.* 3*s.* 9*d.* if taken triennially instead of septennially, but that is a mere accident.

7270. But taking it generally, is it not the fact that there is a difference in the natural reduction of the tithe as compared with prices when prices are falling, and this arises from the fact that the septennial average is fair?—Yes, the course is continually downwards.

7271. Assuming that the present prices were to continue for seven years, then at the end of the seven years the reduction in the tithe would be equal to the reduction in the prices?—Theoretically; but I do not think that the averages are fairly and properly taken.

7272. That is another point; but would it be desirable in the interests of agriculture now, when the prices we may hope are at their very lowest, to alter the average?—I do not attach any very great importance to altering the averages, because if I were arguing from a selfish point of view I might hope that the tendency would be upwards, and therefore the septennial average would be in my favour.

7273. And then the farmer would lose. It might turn out to the great disadvantage of the farmer, when prices are very low, to alter the average?—Yes, so far as he is a tithe payer.

7274. If prices took a turn for the better the farmer would get the advantage, whereas under the present rule he would have four or five years of tithe in proportion to the prices?—Certainly; he has borne the burden and the heat of the day, and it would be very hard not to let him have the benefit of the rise.

7275. Have you any other remarks to make on the subject of tithe?—I had the pleasure of a very long conversation the other day with a gentleman who I believe is to be called before you, and who, far better than myself, would disclose his views in which I thoroughly participate. On the very poor thin lands of the Oolite and Chalk, and on the very worst of the clay lands, there is a means by which I think the landowner can, up to a certain point, divide with the tithe-owner, notwithstanding the strong power which the tithe-owner has to get the tithe. When land has gone out of cultivation, and is simply remitted to prairie value and something for sporting upon it, the tithe-owner clearly has no remedy but to enter into possession and let it, but he enters into possession under much less favourable conditions for finding a tenant than the owner himself; hence, if the tithe-owner entered into possession, he might get a rent if rent were obtainable, but my impression is that he would get, if any, much less than the owner.

7276. When you say that he may be in possession, is that merely for the purpose of letting in order to get his tithe, he does not go in like a mortgagee to get possession of his property, he merely has the right of taking it for the purpose of letting?—Just letting it, and getting what he can get for letting.

7277. Therefore, if he lets the land for less than the tithe he would not get more than that?—He would not get more than that, and the landowner would be quite prepared to pay his tithe if he could get a rent beyond the tithe. But I am confident that conditions exist under which land is so absolutely valueless that the value not only of the rent but of the tithe has absolutely disappeared: in that case I can conceive the landowner and the tithe-owner coming to terms under which the tithe-owner may accept a portion considerably less than that given under the 8th section of the Tithe Act of 1891.

Small holdings.

7278. I think you have had some experience in small holdings?—I was a director of Lord Wantage's Small Farms and Labourers' Land Company for some five years.

7279. Has the result of your experience been to show you that there is any prospect of the sub-division of land into small holdings?—I fear not; the result was eminently disappointing to me. I went into it with a sanguine hope and expectation that we should find plenty of people, not only to let the land to, but to buy the land at moderate prices.

7280. And your experience is that no considerable number of people are ready to buy?—Very few people are ready to buy; they are ready to rent but not to buy.

7281. Do you think there is a probability of many people being prepared to hire small holdings?—Yes, there are people who will hire small holdings even to-day, but it depends so much upon districts. If there were any common lands over which these small people could turn out their cattle as part of the estate which might be split up, then I think you would have no difficulty in letting and probably in selling small holdings. I have the great privilege of living near the New Forest, and I count amongst my best friends some of the small freeholders who live on the borders of the forest. No doubt their ancestors have stolen the land from the Crown, but they are very good fellows notwithstanding.

7282. You concur with those who think that the maintenance of small ownerships in the neighbourhood of the Forest has been mainly due to the fact of having the right to turn out the cattle?—Most certainly; it is the *raison d'être* that they have.

7283. And the same, I suppose, applies to small holdings as well as small ownerships?—No doubt.

State loans.

7284. Do you agree with the principle of advancing money by the State for the purpose of creating small owners?—I think that it is extremely dangerous, and I do not see where the line is to be drawn. I think the blacksmith, the grocer, and the small linen draper, may make out as strong a case for an advance of money to them by the Government as the small landowner.

Equipment of small holdings.

7285. Then one difficulty, as regards the extension of small ownerships, I presume, is the cost of supplying houses and farmsteads suitable for them?—That is the obvious difficulty; it is almost impossible to equip holdings under 50 acres with the necessary appliances for its moderate management, except at a cost that is absolutely prohibitive to the tenant.

7286. Are you now speaking on behalf of the owner of the land, if the owner wishes to take advantage of the Small Holdings Act?—I am speaking of the difficulty as well of the application of the Small Holdings Act for letting.

7287. The great difficulty in that case is the great expense of equipping these small holdings in the shape of farm buildings and houses?—Certainly; I must say that according to my experience, the small holder is very exactive, not perhaps in the first year, but in the second and third years of his tenancy as to his requirement in the shape of buildings, and under the Sanitary Acts the landlords are bound to give him a water supply: that is often most difficult to arrange.

Small holders.

7288. I suppose you are now speaking of small holdings where the holder would be expected to make his living wholly out of his land?—I do not think that the small holder under 50 acres can make a living out of his land, unless he does something else. But these men do something else—these people in the New Forest; the commercial spirit is strong upon them of buying and selling, and I do not know where they get the profit out of it, but they do get a profit and they live.

7289. That would rather tend to show that if greater facilities were provided for these small holdings, the holders of them would find some other means of living along with it?—Yes; but, of course, there is a limitation even to the application of the commercial spirit; it cannot be exercised too largely in a district.

7290. But apparently, from what you say, in the district of the New Forest there is a very large body of very small people who make their living partly from the profits of their small holdings and partly in other ways?—Quite so; but then they have an almost illimitable right of common on the Forest, which helps them very greatly.

7291. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I think you were examined before the Duke of Richmond's Commission?—Yes.

Land Improvement and Enfranchisement Company.

7292. And you were examined in two parts, if I may say so, as a land agent and as the chairman of the Land Improvement and Enfranchisement Company; are you still the chairman of that company?—I am.

7293. May I ask you generally—I do not want to go into figures, but generally since you were examined in 1880—whether the company still goes on granting large loans for improvements on estates?—It is still going on; but of late years since this depression has come in with such emphatic force, we do not do one-tenth of the business that we did in 1880.

Expenditure on improvements.

7294. May I ask you, in the capacity of land agent, is it your opinion that the landowners generally have not laid out so much money in the last 12 years as they did previously?—The landowners certainly have not laid out so much money in the last few years as they did before; the reason why our business has fallen off so largely is simply the indisposition upon the part of the occupier to meet the landowner's expenditure, whether by loan or personally in the shape of increased rent—he has lost heart.

7295. As a matter of fact, do you consider then that on many estates more money is still required to be laid out in improvements on buildings?—Concurrent with a reasonably moderate price of cereals, I have no doubt that there would be still found plenty of areas for the expenditure of money in improvements of land.

7296. You gave us an instance of a very large farm that you have lately let, but you have others in hand—probably when this large farm came in hand it was not in the very best state of cultivation?—Yes, it was in an excellent state of cultivation.

7297. And yet for the last year you could not let it?—It is fair to say that we were asking more rent than we have accepted now.

Uncultivated land.

7298. Do you think, speaking generally of the estates that you manage, that there has been much deterioration in cultivation?—If you had asked me that question three or four years ago I should have said that there had been, but a very considerable area of land has gone out of cultivation on our farms, and since that area has gone out of cultivation the remaining area has, I think, been certainly improved in cultivation and general management since 1885.

7299. May I ask as to this area that has gone out of cultivation, have you much on the estates which you manage?—A very large proportion.

7300. What is happening to the land?—The tenant sows a certain quantity of grass seeds, and then lets it bide, as the expression is.

7301. (*Chairman.*) When you say "gone out of cultivation" I presume you mean that it remains in the hands of the tenant, who treats it as arable land?—He lets it run into a natural state, he has probably sown some grass—it is not a sudden resolve of his, and he takes a crop of oats or barley the last thing, and then he sows some grass seeds and then lets it bide.

7302. And after the natural process, after some years, it becomes pasture?—A very great number of years.

7303. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Would it be laid down in this way, after roots in the ordinary fashion?—Yes, probably after roots, the grass seeds would have been sown amongst the crop of oats which follows the roots.

7304. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) As to this land which you call "gone out of cultivation," but which has tumbled down or perhaps helped it, is that in contradistinction to other land which has been properly laid down for grass?—In contradistinction to that certainly, because where lands have been properly laid down to grass I do not regard those as having gone out of cultivation; although the plough ceases to go over it, it still may be used in the same way as the old pasture land.

Land laid down to grass

7305. Has a certain area of the estates you manage been laid down properly to grass?—A very large area indeed.

7306. Who has borne the chief expense, the landlord or the tenant?—The landlord generally; he has found the grass seeds generally and has contributed very largely to assist the land when laid down to grass afterwards by sending subsidies of manure.

7307. May I ask if you encourage the laying down to grass?—It is an absolute necessity to enable us to let farms.

7308. Because I conclude that on some of the light land farms on the downs it is almost impossible to lay it down to grass?—As I have said the tenant sows a certain amount of rye-grass and hop clover and then it takes its chance. Of course this is cruelly treated; the sheep go over it and eat it, or the bullocks, and take all the feed that there is upon it, and then they are taken away to some other place to drop their manure; it is not fair treatment.

7309. I conclude you are of opinion that in the case of large farms, of the sort you mention at least, there is a certain economy in the management of those farms by having a certain area under grass?—Than the farm to which I have referred I can conceive nothing more perfect for the production of cereals and sheep and wool, and a certain portion of dairy produce; it is perfectly equipped with homesteads in the most convenient sites, and with a pleasant residence, and all together, if that farm were to go out of cultivation, I do not know what farm is going to be cultivated.

Large and small farms compared.

7310. I want to ask your opinion on the farms over a certain size, say 400 or 500 acres; are they more economical to manage than the average of the smaller farms in the district?—Most certainly.

Leases.

7311. Are any of the lands under you held on lease?—We cannot get tenants to take leases now.

7312. Are they simply taken from year to year?—On a yearly or two-yearly tenancy, a yearly tenancy is preferred by the tenants as a rule.

Barley-growing.

7313. (*Mr. Clay.*) What do you consider the depreciation of the good English barley has been from the abolition of the malt tax?—I am afraid your question entails rather a long story.

7314. I mean the depreciation at so much per quarter?—From 1875 we will say it has depreciated from 8*s*. to 10*s*. per quarter.

7315. From the abolition of the malt tax?—I do not know the cause of it. To be perfectly candid, we in common with the general growers in the South of England have not been able to grow on the average as good barleys even from Scotch seed as we grew 30 years ago.

7316. That is not the question I am wanting to get at. I want to know simply what has been the decrease of value, say of good Norfolk barley, from the abolition of the malt tax; how much per quarter?—From memory I should think the reduction has been about 8*s*. per quarter.

The marking of foreign meat.

7317. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Have you thought out the most practical way of dealing with the importations of foreign meat,—to put them on the same platform, as you phrase it, with the home producer?—I have not. I am not an administrator, I am sorry to say, in these directions, but I am quite clear that it should be done; I saw it done in Cairo and Alexandria, and Cyprus, and, therefore, if it is done there there is no reason why a clever people like the English should not do it here.

7318. What do they do out there?—They put a mark upon it.

7319. Each individual small beef steak?—No; the carcase is marked.

7320. Do you think that the main carcase being marked down the back, or in any particular way, would secure the small consumer in the retail market?—As in Egypt, I would put penalties extremely heavy upon the man who sold New Zealand mutton as Southdown or Scotch mutton.

7321. But do you think it probable that an intimation that foreign or colonial mutton was sold "here" would be sufficient to put the purchaser on his guard?—I do not think that it would, because I have heard of cases—I do not know them myself—I have heard of one case where one part of the shop is devoted to the sale of colonial meat and the other part to the sale of English meat; so I am told.

7322. (*Mr. Little.*) I think you said you had 15,000 acres of land in hand?—Yes.

Land in hand.

7323. May I ask you whether that is all of one description of soil, or whether the farming is of one character?—It was pretty much one description of soil on the chalks and oolites, on the thin oolites; but when I speak of the chalks I have in my mind soils where the drift of the tertiaries is of some considerable depth upon the chalk.

7324. Strong clay with flints in it?—Yes; you know the soil with the drift of the tertiaries upon it.

7325. It is chiefly confined to arable land, I presume?—Arable land chiefly. Of course, the farms that we have in hand are the least desirable to let, and they have been farms where the owner from various circumstances, in the exercise of his own discretion, very possibly from our folly in backing him up, thought that if he held on a little longer he would be able to get the old rent.

7326. There was nothing in the management of the estate on which this land lies which led to its not being let?—Nothing at all.

Land Improvement and Enfranchisement Company.

7327. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I asked you about the operations of your company; is not one of the causes of your not doing so much business the Settled Land Act?—No, I do not think that it is; the cases where the Settled Land Act has operated adversely to the interests of our company have been comparatively very few, and I may say that the machinery of our company has been used frequently under the Settled Land Act for the purpose of applying settled moneys for the purpose of improvements.

7328. Then would it mark an indisposition or an inability upon the part of the landowner to spend money, or an indisposition on the part of the tenant to pay interest upon the money spent?—I do not think it marks an indisposition upon the part of the landowner to spend money so much as it marks the absolute indisposition upon the part of the tenant to undertake any further burdens in the shape of rent.

7329. I only mean indisposition on the part of the landowner in not getting any return for his outlay?—That is a very natural thing.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

7330. You have had considerable experience of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes; I have.

7331. Are you of opinion that it has been beneficial?—I am of opinion that the principle of the Agricultural Holdings Act has been decidedly beneficial. I am of opinion that the procedure of the Act has been decidedly antagonistic to its application in a great number of cases, and I should very much wish that the procedure of that Act might be very largely modified.

7332. (*Mr. Little.*) I have one or two questions to ask you on the Agricultural Holdings Act; you are of opinion that the procedure ought to be simplified?—I think, if it is not too radical a suggestion, that it might be abolished.

Compensation.

7333. The principle remaining?—The principle remaining that the tenant is to be compensated for that which is of value to the incoming tenant.

7334. Whether done with the consent of the landlord or not?—That is a large question. Over the whole of my experience and the experience of my firm I do not know that I have ever had a case. We have never been applied to for any work to be done under the First Schedule, I think as a rule, English land is so perfectly equipped that it has all that is wanted for its proper management and cultivation, and the tenant is simply called upon to apply himself to the mere material aspect of the question of cultivation, and for that the second section amply compensates him, under the principle of the Agricultural Holdings Act.

7335. As regards the procedure you would simply provide that the tenant should be entitled to compensation without providing any means for obtaining it?—Precisely.

Procedure under the Act.

7336. You would strike out all the arbitration clauses?—Well, I should not like to exercise too free a pen without very great consideration. But what I wish to eliminate from the Act is this; that first of all the tenant is called upon to give notice to the landlord. That in a very large number of cases he absolutely forgets to do; the notice having been given the landlord bristles with antagonism and makes as large a counterclaim against the tenant as his agent can make out. The result is an unkindliness of feeling and friction raised which is absolutely unnecessary. Then the tenant's and the landlord's valuers meet with their armour on which they used formerly never to exercise at all, but they meet and the claim is asked for, and if that is not present there is an end of the proceedings, and then they get to cross purposes and say that the landlord is hard and that the tenant is bad. If the failure of notice is waived they proceed with their work under the Act, with the almost inevitable result that in my own experience an award under the Agricultural Holdings Act is scarcely ever made in proper time; a case which Sir Nigel Kingscote knows very well, in which I was the umpire, compelled me to run after the county court registrar of Essex to obtain the enlarged time necessary to make the award.

7337. You would be satisfied with the principle being accepted that a tenant is entitled to compensation?—Most certainly.

7338. And with regard to the time for making the award, what would you say?—The award practically never can be made until something like Christmas, three months after the tenancy has terminated, where a Michaelmas tenancy obtains.

7339. There is no limit of time for the umpire to make his award, it may be indefinitely extended?—It may be indefinitely extended if he chooses to go to the registrar of the county court.

7340. Is not this complicated procedure a necessary consequence of the interference between landlord and tenant by law?—I like the principle of the Agricultural Holdings Act, because I have known in the far distant past some injustice and wrong done to tenants from the non-recognition by the owners of the land of improvements which they have made—not large ones, but valuable manurial products of which they have been deprived; and, therefore, it is that reluctantly, because I am a great believer in the doctrine of *laisser faire*, I conclude it is necessary and desirable that there should be a law instead of mere custom, which obtains in some districts, recognising tenant right.

Contracting out.

7341. (*Chairman.*) And that the landlord and tenant should not be allowed to contract out of the Act?—The landlord and tenant should not be allowed to contract out of it. That was the defect of the Act of 1875.

7342. That is the essential principle of the Act of 1883?—Yes.

Tithe.

7343. (*Mr. Little.*) With reference to the tithe question, I gather that the Act of 1891 has been practically ineffective in relieving the owners of tithe where the tithe is very heavy?—I only know of one case where the eighth section has been applied, and there it was fought out nearly to the bitter end, but it resulted in a compromise.

7344. Would you think it desirable that the tithe payer and the tithe owner should be empowered to make a binding bargain lasting for more than one year as to the reduction of the tithe?—A great number of tithe owners are merely tenants for life or during possession, and it would be hard, therefore, for a life incumbent to bind his successor; but I can look forward with great certainty that under the course which I believe I have suggested in my examination by the President, I can conceive of conditions under which the tithe owner would be an extremely wise and prudent man if he made terms with the landowner so as to avoid absolute loss by entering into possession of the land from which he can get no good.

7345. If the tithe rentcharge equals the present value, or even closely approaches the rental value, the landlord has no inducement to keep the land in cultivation?—None.

7346. The tithe owner would be a very bold man if he took the remedy which he possesses of letting the land or cultivating it?—He would be an extremely bold man if he did it, because I venture to say that the landowner is in a far better position to let the land than the tithe owner could be under any circumstances.

7347. If the land is uncultivated the tithe owner gets nothing?—If it is uncultivated the tithe owner gets nothing.

7348. On the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread, it would be better for him to make an arrangement with the landlord to take considerably less than his legal payment?—Obviously it would. I know of one case where the application of the 8th section was met by a compromise.

7349. Would it very much facilitate such bargains if they could be made valid bargains, extending over a period of years? I put a case which has come under my notice of a farm which is let for 100*l.* a year, and upon which the tithe is 112*l.* Obviously the ordinary landowner has no inducement whatever to let that land; but suppose he could go to the tithe owner and say to him. "Now we will divide this 100*l.* a year between us "if you will agree for seven years, and I will keep the "farm let, and pay you 50*l.* a year," would not that be an advantageous arrangement for both parties?—I do not see why they could not make the arrangement according to the interest which each party possesses.

7350. Supposing they were both free, but a clerical tithe owner cannot do that?—Why not?

7351. He cannot bind his successor?—But each can arrange for the interest that he represents.

7352. What I mean is that you want a certainty for a period of years, and the clerical tithe owner cannot give the landlord that certainty; would you think there was any injustice if such a bargain were made, say with the ratification of the Board of Agriculture, to endure for a certain period of years?—I should like them to make their own bargains. The tithe owner would be benefited if there was a sudden rise in the value of cereals.

7353. But a bargain for a year, or an uncertain time might not be sufficient for the landlord?—I am making that last remark on the understanding that I would extend it considerably beyond one year.

7354. All that I wished to get at was whether it would be fair to make such a bargain binding upon the successor?—I do not think it would be wise to make the bargain binding on the successor. I think the parties might make a bargain between themselves depending upon the thousand and one varying conditions in each case. That would meet the case better than any other bargain that could be made by legislation.

7355. Notwithstanding that such a bargain might be upset at any moment by the death of the incumbent, or the avoidance of the living?—Yes, because the successor would be almost certain to be willing to adopt the conditions which his predecessor had found necessary and desirable.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

7356. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) With reference to the Agricultural Holdings' Act, when you say that a landlord ought not to be allowed to contract himself out of the Act you mean, I presume, unless the tenant is assured of his compensation or something as good or better than the Act?—That is part of the Act now.

7357. You approve of the principle of the Act?—I approve perfectly of the principle of the Act. I think it cannot be improved upon, and I believe amongst tenant farmers and land agents the principle of the Act is absolutely recognised and approved.

7358. That principle being the value to the incoming tenant rather than the outlay which is made by him?—Yes.

7359. I understood you to say that you think the notices which are now necessary ought to be abandoned?—There is no necessity for them at all.

Lincolnshire custom.

7360. Are you acquainted with the Lincolnshire custom?—Perfectly.

7361. It is a fact in the Lincolnshire custom that there is no notice on either side and it has never given rise to any difficulty whatever?—I have never known it give rise to any difficulty.

Paul and Portarlington.

7362. Have you any further changes to recommend for this Commission to consider with reference to that Act?—Yes, there is one which I venture to call your attention to with reference to the case of Paul and Lord Portarlington. It is technically an amendment of the Act which I think is necessary. The circumstances of the case are these: It was in Dorsetshire, and the case was that of a very large farm, and when the tenancy was expiring Mr. Paul forgot to serve the notice. But in Dorsetshire there obtains the custom of over-holding. The tenancy proper expired at Michaelmas, but the tenant has the power of over-holding the buildings and certain lands around the buildings for the purpose of consuming his straw and fodder. Mr. Paul proceeded after the termination of his tenancy (it was a lease) to feed a large quantity of cattle with corn and oil cake and cotton cake in the premises during the months of October, November, December, January, and February, when his over-holding ceased. The case was tried before Lord Coleridge finally, and he held that the word "tenancy" under the terms of the Act meant the absolute surrender of the whole of the lands, and that, therefore, Mr. Paul was entitled to be compensated under the Agricultural Holdings Act, for which he had served a notice after his tenancy had expired, and he was paid accordingly. I think that the principle is unfair and unreasonable. The tenancy expires, and the tenant has simply those acres of land and the yards and barns left for him for the conversion of his corn, and he has no right to draw upon the incoming tenant a large portion of tenant right under those circumstances. I hope I have made myself intelligible.

7363. Quite so; but at the same time the incoming tenant would derive all the advantage of the consumption of that extra amount of cake?—He might; but the circumstances of that case are peculiar, that the consumption of a large quantity of cake would be on an extremely small area of land. My partner was one of the witnesses in this case. I will not venture to commit myself to the quantities, but a very large quantity of cake was consumed on a small area and the surface of the pasture disappeared because the cattle were kept in such a limited area to consume the cake.

7364. The case which you have submitted to us would only apply in certain districts of the country where the system of over-holding exists?—It would only apply in those cases.

7365. Are they numerous or common?—They are very large indeed; all over the southern and western counties the custom obtains absolutely.

7366. And that, you think, ought to be altered?—Lord Coleridge's ruling ought to be remedied in that direction.

Low prices and bad seasons.

7367. Now you have given us some very interesting and important information as to the condition of agriculture in the districts with which you are acquainted; what is the chief cause of this terrible depression?—Low prices, and rather bad seasons.

7368. I suppose the real remedies, then, are improved seasons and improved prices?—Remedy the last, if we can, and the first must be accepted as they come.

Prospects of agriculture.

7369. I gather that you see no real prospect of a permanent improvement in agriculture?—No, I should say not; we have adapted ourselves up to a certain point in Wiltshire to the altered conditions. First of all, the fall in wheat has been greater than the fall in barley, and consequently we have applied ourselves with not signal success, to the growing of barley rather than wheat occasionally. Oats, too, have maintained their relative value better than wheat has, and therefore we are disposed frequently to grow oats instead of wheat, and the community of idea upon that point is obvious from the large proportion of lessened area of wheat in this last year as compared with the previous years.

7370. From 1853 to 1874 you said there was great and general prosperity, and then that after 1875 a change began, getting worse and worse after the year 1879?—Yes.

7371. And which has continued up to now?—It has been further aggravated recently.

Low prices.

7372. And that change, I understand, is mainly owing to the fall in the price of agricultural produce?—I would not say agricultural produce so much as I would limit it to wheat and barley in a degree, and in a lesser degree to oats, and in some degree also to sheep and mutton.

7373. (*Captain Thomas.*) And wool?—Wool, certainly.

7374. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) In fact, I should not have been very far out if I said it was chiefly, in your opinion, due to the fall in the price of many articles of agricultural produce, in which, of course, there may be some exceptions?—Yes.

Causes of low prices.

7375. What, in your opinion, is the reason of this great fall in prices; to what do you attribute it?—To the large import of foreign corn mainly.

7376. And next?—And that that import of foreign corn has been stimulated very largely, unduly, unfairly stimulated by the depreciated value of silver acting on India, Russia, and Hungary.

7377. (*Chairman.*) And that only applies specially to wheat?—That applies specially to wheat.

7378. As distinguished from barley and oats?—Yes.

The currency.

7379. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Would you be prepared to answer one or two questions in connection with the depreciated price of silver?—As far as I am able, but I must ask the Commission to understand that I am not a capable person in that direction.

7380. I will not ask you those questions unless you wish?—I should be quite willing to answer them so far as I am able to do so.

7381. Do you trace the depreciation in silver to the monetary changes which were made on the Continent and in America in 1873 and 1874?—Having read Sir David Barbour's books, and having thought carefully out the whole question, and observed the coincident fluctuations in the value of silver and the value of cereals, I can have no doubt of their absolutely logical relation with each other.

7382. Those monetary changes he would say have led to what is called the appreciation of gold?—They have arisen from the appreciation of gold.

7383. Or caused the appreciation of gold?—Or caused the appreciation of gold.

7384. And that appreciation has caused a depreciation between gold and silver, which gives this bonus to the countries having a depreciated currency?—Undoubtedly.

7385. Then you do attribute a large part of the fall in the prices of produce which are affecting us so seriously to the great monetary changes which were made at that time?—I honestly believe that that is so.

7386. Do you wish to say anything with regard to any remedy for that state of things, or have you any proposals to suggest to this Commission?—Having given you my confession of faith, the remedy is obviously the adoption of a double standard upon terms to be settled. I cannot venture to give the terms of settlement, but that there will be a double standard, a settled ratio between silver and gold, I can have no doubt. It would at once put upon a steady and prosperous footing the value of agricultural produce, and indeed all other produce, for it applies to everything.

Uncultivated land.

7387. I wanted to ask you a question about the land out of cultivation that is in your hands. What kind of land is it that you say has "laid itself down to grass?"—Of course they are the most inferior lands; they are lands that have been simply maintained in the past in more or less profitable cultivation by the disposition on the part of the landlord to equip those areas with the necessary farm buildings, water supply, and roads, and things of that kind; and what the landlord has contributed, equally with the energy and capacity of the tenant and his disposition to farm what is called highly and liberally. Those conditions alone maintain the productive capacity of those lands, and the margin of profit under the joint contribution was a very narrow one. It has absolutely disappeared under the present conditions.

7388. Under the altered conditions of prices you mean?—Yes.

7389. Then I am to understand that the land which has "laid itself down" in this way is practically worthless, or worth very little per acre?—It is worth very little per acre. It may be worth 6*d.* to 9*d.* per acre for sporting purposes, and it may be worth 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* in addition for the sheep to run over it. I must ask you to understand that I speak of lands out of cultivation. I am not referring to the 15,000 acres of land which we are cultivating.

7390. (*Chairman.*) You are not now referring to farms wholly gone out of cultivation, but parts of farms which the farmer has not thought it worth while to treat as arable?—Quite so.

7391. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I describe the land in these words, "The land which has laid itself down to grass?"—Yes, in some cases it has. On clay land it has. But what I would mean is the case of the farmer who is sick at heart with the whole surroundings, and he says, "I will take a crop of oats and sow it down with "Italian grass and hop clover, and there it shall "remain until times are better."

Cattle disease.

7392. Have you suffered in Wiltshire at any time from cattle diseases?—Very slightly.

7393. You have had some cases?—Yes, but they have not spread.

7394. I suppose if it had spread, or you had a recurrence of disease, that would be a terrible calamity?—It would be a terrible calamity, because we are certainly increasing our stores of cattle in Wiltshire, more in proportion than our sheep.

Slaughter of cattle at port of debarkation.

7395. Would you agree with the evidence which has been given by a great many witnesses, that with a view of preventing the possibility of any recurrence of disease, cattle might be slaughtered at the port of landing?—Most certainly.

7396. Without any exception?—Without any exception at all.

Tithe.

7397. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Has this land that has gone out of cultivation any tithe upon it?—Yes.

7398. And the tithe has gone?—When I say there is tithe upon it I must explain myself. Most of the tithe apportionments in the districts to which the remark applies, are only a farm apportionments, not field apportionments, and therefore it would be extremely difficult to allocate to any particular parts of land the amount of tithe upon it, and under the circumstances the tithe-owner would, in the absence of a field apportionment, have to get the tithe where he could get it.

7399. You do not know of a case where the land has gone out of cultivation owing to the tithe?—Yes, I think I do.

7400. What kind of case would that be?—A very exceptional case, but it is the case I was speaking of where the tithe-owner and the landowner came to a compromise instead of applying the provisions of the 8th section of the Act of 1891.

7401. It went out of cultivation?—It went out of cultivation, and it is out and has been for some time.

7402. (*Chairman.*) Is that the whole farm?—Well, I should think 40 to 50 per cent. of the farm.

7403. Is that the case where there is field apportionment?—There was more or less field apportionment, but it was such large areas of field apportionment that it would be very difficult indeed to define the precise areas where they have gone out of cultivation and where not. It is absolutely open land. I am speaking of the chalk district in Hampshire and open land, so that, of course, you could not define precisely the areas relatively gone to grass with the areas subject to special tithe from which it is taken.

7404. (*Mr. Dalton.*) The tithe-owner and the landowner came to a compromise, but notwithstanding that it has not gone back into cultivation?—No, the compromise was only effected last year.

7405. What was the nature of the compromise?—The nature of the compromise was about 50 per cent. The tithe-owner took about 50 per cent. of his claim.

7406. But the result of that compromise has not been to bring it back into cultivation?—No.

7407. What inducement has the landowner when the tithe is larger than the rent, to expend any money on the improvement of the land?—He has no inducement.

7408. Is it not desirable that some tribunal should be arranged by which the tithe should be reduced in such a case so as to give an inducement to the landowner?—I think it is perfectly reasonable and equitable that the tithe which was commuted in 1836 when we were in the full bloom of protection should in certain circumstances be moderated. The prices were very low in 1836. I may illustrate the lowness of prices in 1836. I remember as a boy staying with a friend who looked after the New Forest hounds, and his coming home from Southampton saying that he had bought a load of wheat at 7*l*. 10*s*., that is 30*s*. per quarter, to feed the hounds upon, and I remember the cry of shame that was raised that "dogs should be fed upon "wheat when God's people had been so short of it."

7409. But is the tithe not very often higher on the worst arable lands than on grass lands?—It is invariably higher on the arable land than on the pasture land: I mean that it does not follow *ad valorem*.

7410. But I understood you to say that you thought it was sufficient to leave the arrangement open to the clergyman for the time being and the landowner?—That is under the existing Acts, yes, certainly.

7411. But do not you think it is desirable that there should be either some tribunal or some means of their coming to a permanent arrangement?—I think so. I think that it is desirable that the whole question of tithe should should be reconsidered. I was remarking about that year 1836 when the tithe Acts were passed, we were in the full bloom of protection; we are now absolutely without it, and our prices at the present time are so abominably low, to use a strong expression, that I do not see that it can be fair that the imposition of what is supposed to be a tenth of the produce of these lands—which were kept in cultivation and maintained and managed entirely by the enterprise and skill of the farmer—I do not think that it is fair that the conditions which then obtained as to prices should be allowed to apply now to lands which have ceased practically to produce what they were supposed to be capable of producing in those days. A reconsideration of the tithe to my mind would be not only equitable and just but would be most absolutely beneficial.

7412. But without having a reconsideration of the whole question of the tithe, what objection do you see to a power being given to make a bargain, subject to the approval of the Board of Agriculture, which shall be binding upon the successors of a country clergyman? You cannot expect the landowner to make a large expenditure on improvements without a binding bargain?—Certainly not.

7413. What is the precise objection, supposing it were settled by a proper tribunal?—It is not the landowner that would make the improvements, it would be the tenant who, of course, would be paying the tithe as rent, supposing a rent were obtainable for the land, which it is not now.

7414. But in this case that Mr. Little mentioned, with a tithe of 112*l*. and a rent of 100*l*., what would you do?—I would reconsider that case by all means.

7415. Would you reconsider that particular case?—I ask for a reconsideration of that and kindred cases; there are many of them.

7416. I think you said that you thought that the producer was entitled to be on a perfectly level footing with the producers of other countries?—Yes.

The currency.

7417. How can you do that; he is not on the same footing as to climate, soil, or cost of labour?—I venture to think that under the English climate the English soil will grow as good wheat as any in the whole world, and that in the vale of White Horse in Berkshire there are places, climatically, and by soil, as good for the production of wheat as any country in the world.

7418. Take the price of labour in India and England, how could you put that on a level?—I do not want the English level of wages to be lowered in any degree. I wish the question of price to be protected against the fall in the value of the rupee.

7419. But you would wish to put it on a perfectly level footing in one respect, but not in the others?—I scarcely appreciate your question.

7420. Your statement is that you thought the producer in one country was entitled to be on a perfectly level footing with the producers of another country?—Yes; *quoad* the currency.

7421. Nothing else?—Nothing else. Let them stand on their own bottoms absolutely.

7422. You are not proposing a duty on them?—Certainly not; nothing is further from my mind.

Protection.

7423. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Are you a believer in protection?—Not in the least.

7424. Do you think it would be an advantage to the farmer to have protection?—Not a bit.

Slaughter of cattle at port of debarkation.

7425. Why do you advocate that cattle should be slaughtered at the port of landing?—Simply because we may avoid the diseases which are incident to the import of live cattle.

7426. But presuming the country from which these cattle came was free from disease, would you still have them slaughtered at the port of landing?—If you can guarantee absolute immunity from disease, then, of course, the necessity for slaughter at the ports of import ceases to operate; but the diseases are so absolutely subtle that it is scarcely possible to discriminate.

7427. Supposing there was an immunity from disease in foreign countries, you would not advocate the slaughter of cattle at the port of landing?—If immunity from disease was certain to continue, of course my objections would be minimised in degree, but then in all human things there is no certainty; there cannot be any certainty.

7428. But you only advocate that on the ground of protection from cattle disease?—Certainly.

The currency.

7429. You said just now that the import of wheat had been unduly stimulated by the currency question, would that be the case in Argentina?—I do not know anything about Argentina, except that the people have lost a great deal of money there.

7430. I believe you may be aware that in Argentina a very large amount of wheat will be exported from there into this country this year?—I have heard so.

7431. Does the currency question affect this?—I do not suppose that it would. I do not know the currency question of Argentina at all.

7432. So that you would not consider the adoption of two standards would in every case effect the remedy that you think desirable?—I do not know, but I should be most delighted to see it tried.

7433. Would it effect the remedy that you wish for, even if it were tried in such a case as Argentina or Russia?—I cannot tell you, because I have not got data about Argentina.

7434. Or Russia, I said?—Russia, certainly it would.

7435. What is the currency of Russia?—Roubles.

7436. Is it based upon silver or paper?—The paper rouble of Russia is 3*s*. 2*d*.—that is the currency value, but in the open market it is not worth more than 1*s*. 10½*d*.—I am speaking really without having recently looked into the matter.

Tithe.

7437. How would you propose to reconsider the question of tithe?—I should ask that valuers should be appointed by the Board of Agriculture to hold courts to listen to the complaints of tithe payers as to certain areas of land which they may think, under the existing condition of prices, are unduly charged.

7438. So, presuming that the land was unduly charged, you would give the tithe payer a reduction by releasing him from those obligations?—Certainly. I may supplement my answer by saying that I believe the tithe owner would practically be benefitted in the long run by such a scheme, because he would get a certain payment instead of getting a probably uncertain income by entering into possession of the land.

Tenure.

7439. How is land let under your agency?—Almost invariably on yearly tenancies, and in some cases for two years.

The fixing of rent.

7440. How is the rent fixed?—By the higgling of the market.

7441. That is by open competition?—If we can get anybody to trade with us.

7442. You said the difficulty was in letting poor farms?—Yes.

Difficulty in letting.

7443. In the case of good farms would you have a difficulty in letting them?—No; of course goodness and poverty are questions of degree. A fair farm up to 400 or 500 acres is still a lettable commodity at a price.

7444. Would you have to give a reduction of rent in such a case?—I have said from something like 30 up to 45 per cent., and I have known one or two cases where it has been up to 55 per cent.

7445. Would you get many applications for this farm?—Not many, one has to deal very delicately with such cases.

7446. Are the farms let by tender?—Never.

The fixing of rent.

7447. Who fixes the rent?—If you offered a farm by tender in the counties of which I have specifically spoken, Wiltshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, and Oxfordshire, I not believe you would get a tender given you.

7448. How do you fix the rent?—By the higgling of the market.

7449. The higgling of the market would assume that it would let by tender?—I do not think it would. The higgling of the market would be this: we should ask for a farm of 500 acres, say 350*l.* a year; the tenant would say, "If you will lay out so much money for "buildings, and do this and that, I will give 250*l.*" That would be about the basis upon which we should probably transact business. We should part, and he would come back again and say, "I will spring another "25*l.*" and we should say, "No, we shall not do it." The higgling would result probably in our saying, "Well, you shall have the farm, subject to two years' "notice to quit, at 325*l.*, and we will knock off 25*l.* a "year for the first year of entry, and make some payment for imaginary or real dilapidation of cultivation or condition."

7450. You would take, I presume, the best terms you could get?—We should take the best terms we could get, but there are some of our clients who, of course, would say that they would not go below a certain price.

7451. So they practically fix the rent at which the land is let?—Yes.

7452. When there are two or three men in competition for a farm, I presume the higgling of the market would mean that you would accept the one of those men who would give the best terms?—The one who would give the best terms, but not in treaty with all three at a time, because if an agent did that once he would never let a farm again, but he must simply say, "I will treat "with A, and if A and I cannot agree then I will try B, "and if B and I cannot agree then I will try C, and "so on."

7453. So that he has more than one string to his bow?—He has more than one string to his bow, but remember the intending tenant has now twenty strings to his bow if we do not come to his terms.

7454. (*Chairman.*) He knows twenty farms which are unlet?—Yes, and for which he can treat.

Difficulty in letting.

7455. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Is it a fact that there are so many desirable farms to let?—We had 15,000 acres in hand last year—I do not think it is quite so much this year—which we shall be only too happy to let.

7456. Is that desirable land?—Some of it is very desirable land. In an earlier period of my life I should have thought so.

7457. Have you endeavoured to let it?—We have indeed.

7458. At a reduction of rent?—At a reduction of rent; a very big reduction of rent.

7459. For what reasons are the farms not let?—Because we cannot get anybody to take them.

7460. (*Chairman.*) I think you said, at the beginning of your evidence, that this land was mainly very large farms, and the difficulty was to find tenants with sufficient capital; was not that so?—That was quite so. With regard to those 15,000 acres of land of which I speak, the farms vary in size from 500 up to 1,700 acres.

7461. (*Mr. Lambert.*) So that really a man has not so many strings to his bow, because he is unable to find sufficient capital to take those large farms?—Certainly, but sometimes a tenant will say, "If you will strike off "a certain area of that farm of 500 or 600 acres I will "take it." We have been treating with one farm that I know of where the tenant has said, "If you will take "off 100 acres of that farm I will take the rest of it, "but I will not take the whole of it."

7462. So that it is easier to let a farm of less than 500 acres?—It is infinitely easier to let them with less than 500 acres.

7463. Then you have no difficulty in letting farms under 500 acres?—The number of tenants who are disposed to treat are, up to a certain point, limited; but still they are to be found if the farm has no grave disabilities, and we should be able to let a farm, even up to 500 or 600 acres.

Shooting rights.

7464. Then as regards the game, does it go with the farm?—It does now, almost invariably.

7465. Is that an advantage to the tenant?—I do not know that it is an advantage, but it is a pleasure to him.

7466. (*Chairman.*) Do you say that you almost invariably let the game to the tenant?—In these latter days, yes. On the large estates it is not so, but practically the question of game has disappeared as a difficulty between the landlord and tenant.

7467. (*Mr. Lambert.*) By giving it to the tenants?—There is a good understanding, generally speaking. The landlord has the winged game, and the tenant, under the Ground Game Act, does what he likes with the ground game.

7468. You would give the tenant the ground game to do what he likes with?—He has got it already.

7469. Not under the Ground Game Act?—Will you tell me in what directions he has not it?

7470. (*Mr. Lambert.*) He has only a right to put a trap in a certain position, and only a right to one gun?—He can use a net.

7471. Would you free him from those restrictions?—No; he can use nets to any extent.

Reductions in rent.

7472. (*Captain Thomas.*) Are your tenants satisfied with the reductions that you have made in the rents?—No, I should say not; because I do not think that, as a rule, with the reductions that have been made, the tenants are doing themselves any good generally.

Payment of rent out of capital.

7473. You consider then that they are paying rent out of capital or borrowed money?—I will not say that they are paying rent out of capital or borrowed money, but I mean they are not adequately remunerated for the labour and energy which they bring to bear in the conduct of their business generally. They take the concession of rent; it is a compromise—in the hope that something will turn up; that things will be better. That hope is disappearing very rapidly under the experience of the past four or five years.

7474. You do not consider, then, that they are spending their capital at the present time?—There has been a very large amount of capital lost in the past, but I should say that, of course, with regard to the loss of capital of the tenant farmers, as a rule a man with 500 acres of land would have, probably, 4,000*l.* or 5,000*l.*, and he may perhaps be indebted to his relatives or perhaps his bankers for a certain proportion of that money, but he manages to live. At all events, the farm supplies him with a home and a horse to ride, and a great number of minor luxuries which, if he went into the town to live he would be without, and miss very sadly.

7475. If you were convinced as agent that a farmer paid rent out of his capital, would you feel justified in compelling him to pay the full maximum of his rent?—He must know his business so much better than I know it, that I must ask him to do what he thinks he can do. I have known cases where men have paid money out of their capital, and where my clients have been able to afford it they have done a very kind turn behind my back, and the tenants have appreciated it very thoroughly. But between the agent and the tenant it is quite clear that the agent cannot go into the resources from which the man gets his rent, and the way in which he gets it. Some men are making a profit even now; some very capable close shavers; but I have no knowledge whether payments are made out of capital or otherwise, speaking generally.

7476. Do not you think it is the duty of an agent between landlord and tenant to know that?—I do consider those matters, and I think of them very much, but I have no right to intervene. When a man says "I can take a farm formerly let at 700*l.* a year, "at 350*l.* or 400*l.*" I have no possible right to say, "Are you paying this rent that you have just given me "out of capital?" First of all he would not know.

7477. (*Chairman.*) You can only deal with him on an application for rent?—Yes.

7478. (*Captain Thomas.*) That is what I meant; that a tenant who pays out of pocket would naturally complain to the agent?—He does complain, but what he would say is: "How am I to go on with the farm; I am losing money;" and I say: "Very well, what rent are you paying?"

7479. Then you meet him fairly?—If he made out a capable case, and if, on inspection of his farm, I thought it was dearer than other farms, I should recommend a corresponding reduction.

7480. (*Chairman.*) You have to consider whether you can get the same rent from someone else, and whether he can get another farm at a less rent?—Certainly.

7481. Those elements are considered on both sides?—Yes.

Condition of agriculture, 1847-1852.

7482. (*Mr. Elton.*) I want to know a little more about this period between 1847 and 1852. It was not quite so bad as now. 1853 to 1875 was an age of plenty?—Yes.

7483. Was not the Californian gold produced in great plenty just before that period?—I believe the great discoveries of Californian gold were in 1854. At the latter end of 1853 to the beginning of 1854.

7484. Then it was about coincident with the Californian increase of gold that the age of plenty began. Do you connect that, in your mind, with the age of depression?—Most certainly. It is always present to my mind as one of the most absolute coincidences that I know.

7485. Now, in that period of plenty, was not there a very bad year, about 1862, as bad as 1879?—No, it was not so bad as 1879.

7486. It rained all the autumn and summer?—It was a wet season.

7487. Hay lay in November?—Yes, but it was not so bad as in 1879.

7488. But it was very bad. I am doing right in calling attention to the fact that there was that black spot?—Yes.

Depression in Wiltshire and Oxfordshire.

7489. Now, you told us about well-watered Wiltshire farms, with water meadows and all that. You have also lands up in Oxfordshire and lands about the Chilterns?—Yes.

7490. That is a place where there is very great depression?—That is a place where there is very great depression.

7491. There you have no water at all?—It is very difficult to obtain; water is obtainable now on better terms than it has been through the adoption of the American windmill pumps.

7492. My point is this: Has the presence of the water in the Wiltshire farms saved them from the fate of the Chilterns?—No doubt it is better. We look after some large property on the Chiltern Hills, and they have to supply water at considerable cost.

7493. In the Chilterns you will find a whole parish in one rough grass field practically?—I do not know of that parish, but I know the reduction of returns on the Chiltern Hills has been something awful.

Price of land in Berkshire and Dorsetshire.

7494. Berkshire is one of your worst parts, generally speaking, is it not?—Some parts of Berkshire are. The lands lying on the chalk and on the hills in Berkshire.

7495. They are sold for 5*l.* per acre, fee simple?—Some lands have been sold for 5*l.* an acre.

7496. In Dorsetshire and Wiltshire what could you expect from chalk hill land; about 10*l.* or 11*l.* an acre?—No, a great deal of the land is not worth anything like that.

7497. A reasonable hill farm of 200 acres, with arable, wood, and grass, lying about 900 feet high, about how much would that fetch?—From 8*l.* to 12*l.* an acre; of course subject to the question of tithe.

7498. A few years ago it would be worth a great deal more?—More than double. The depreciation of the capital value is quite as large—I think it is larger.

Small holdings.

7499. When you were a young man in Wiltshire, and in fact with your long experience of the West of England tenures, can you tell us whether there was not a system of small holdings prevalent all over the place before the large farms came in?—Yes; those conditions coincided just with my entry into farming life. I remember a great number of what were called the common fields (that was before the Enclosures), where each occupier generally held as copyholder. I am able to tell this Commission that there is one place at Stratton, in Dorsetshire, where they can be seen at the present time, if anyone wishes to see them; they have been held from the times of the Romans probably.

7500. These copyholds were small in extent; from 20 to 30 acres?—They were sometimes 150 acres.

7501. There was a customary yard-land, which would mean about 30 or 40 acres?—It was dependent upon the district in which it was, but that 30 or 40 acres would be lying in strips all over the parish, and their sheep and cows were fed in common, and each man was obliged to sow his land at defined times, and to mow his land at certain times.

7502. There was a town flock and a town herd, and a custom of cultivation?—Yes, a fixed custom.

7503. And then it was common all over the place at certain times of the year?—Certainly; there was no freedom of action at all.

7504. And these small people then did not prosper?—No, they have all disappeared; not at all from any disposition on the part of the great landowners that they should not exist, but simply because it did not pay them to hold those small holdings at the relative value for sale of their interest in that land.

7505. You do not think that it was because the landlords refused to renew, but it was because the tenants did not ask for it?—I think the landlords did refuse, because they might wish to enclose a large portion of their lands, and of course they would not renew to one man who would be outstanding.

7506. Naturally the Ecclesiastical Commissioners would not renew if they could help it?—No; they would be very glad to go back to the small holdings system if they could.

7507. In Dorsetshire does that system prevail?—At one district in Dorsetshire, and at Royston in Cambridge. Those are the only two places that I know of.

7508. It died out in Somersetshire?—Yes, it died out.

Land Improvement and Enfranchisement Company.

7509. (*Lord Vernon.*) You are chairman of some company for lending money on improvements on land, are you not?—Yes.

7510. What rate of interest do you lend money at?—We are lending money at the present time at about 4 per cent. simple interest, with the necessary sinking fund to extinguish it in 25 years.

7511. Do you advance that money yourself, or do you borrow it?—No, we advance it temporarily ourselves; but having obtained from the Board of Agriculture the approval of the works which are being carried out, then our practice is to sell the rent charge thus created, which includes the charges of the company, and of the incidental expenses of carrying it through, to the insurance companies and other capitalists of that kind.

7512. Then what sort of form does the landowner have to go through before he can raise the money?—He has to sign a document (which I hope he reads carefully before he does sign it), disclosing the terms of the transaction, and of course it depends upon the value of money at the time of the transaction, and then he subscribes a request to the Board of Agriculture to send an inspector to inspect the works. The Board of Agriculture looks very carefully at every item of the expenditure, and guards the interest of the tenant for life as well as the remainder-man in the whole transaction, and after the works are completed, and after being inspected once or twice during their progress, an order is created charging the land for 25 years with the necessary amount, including all expenses.

7513. Can you tell us what is your commission?—It varies from 3 per cent. up to 5 per cent. in very small cases.

7514. Does not it even amount to 10 per cent.?—As a director of the company, I should like it to be 10 per cent.

7515. Do you not think that the forms that the landlord has to go through in raising money are unnecessarily expensive?—They are expensive in small cases, but they are not really expensive when a large business is being done.

7516. Then they would be expensive to any landowner who wished to convert big farms into small ones?—Yes; they would be expensive, certainly, but would depend on the amount of the transaction.

7517. Therefore they are detrimental to the creation of small holdings?—No doubt to that extent they are detrimental, but of course any landlord in the present time who wished to raise money for the purpose of improving his farm can go into the open market if his estates be free and charge his lands at 3½ or 3¼ per cent., which of course would offer him far better terms than a company like ours.

7518. Any restriction either of form or expense that could be made to facilitate the borrowing of money by the tenant for life would tend to the investment of capital in the land, would it not?—Any restrictions that could be removed, or any economies that could be effected would certainly be most desirable, but my experience dictates most distinctly that there should be no possible relaxations of the inspection and careful watching that is kept on the execution of the works, and their inception by the Board of Agriculture.

The marking of foreign meat.

7519. I think you said that you thought foreign meat should be sold as foreign meat?—Yes.

7520. You are aware that a Committee of the House of Commons sat for a length of time trying the matter, and came to the conclusion that it was impracticable to do that?—I regretted to read their conclusions very much.

7521. In your large experience, do you know of any really good land that has gone out of cultivation?—No.

Uncultivated land.

7522. Nothing but very bad land?—No good land has gone out of cultivation.

Land Improvement and Enfranchisement Company.

7523. (*Lord Cobham.*) What is the per-centage on the loans that you lend out to the landlords, including the sinking fund and expenses?—I think at the present rate it is about 6*l.* 1*s.*, including interest on principal and sinking fund for 25 years.

7524. It has fallen of late years, then?—It has fallen concurrently with the lowered value of money. When our company was first established we used to get 6*l.* 14*s.* 1*d.* per cent. That meant 4½ per cent. simple interest; then it fell to 4¼ simple interest; and now we can sell our rentcharges on so much better terms than we could formerly, with the rate now of simple interest we should be able to borrow money, if we wished to borrow it, at something like 3¾ to 4 per cent. instead of the 4½ per cent. which we had to pay formerly.

7525. (*Lord Vernon.*) Does that include everything?—Of course it does not include the inspector's charges.

7526. That is what I meant?—But they are all included in the capital sum advanced.

7527. Excuse me, that is just what I want to arrive at; I meant the rate of interest on the actual money spent; I did not mean the money raised, but if a man raises 500*l.* he has to add 200*l.* for inspection and commission and everything, and then he has to pay 6*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.*, not on the 700*l.*, but on the 500*l.*, which makes the rate of interest much higher. The rate of interest is considerably more than the money laid out in the improvement. Do you follow me?—Yes; I quite agree with you that that is so; that the actual per-centage of cost on the capital sum, in small amounts, when expended for improvements, is undoubtedly very large, because the machinery that is imported into the condition of supervision of those improvements is quite as large as it would be if you were borrowing 10,000*l.*

7528. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you think that the office expenses could be at all reduced?—I have always thought that the duties of the inspectors to the Board of Agriculture have been most economically remunerated. As a rule, they are extremely good men who are selected, and their charge is only three guineas a day. I wonder you get such good men for three guineas a day.

7529. But when all is said and done, it is a serious deterrent to poor men who have to pay a charge of 6, 7, 8, or 9 per cent. for the next 25 years?—No doubt; I quite agree with you. But if the landlord is free to act for himself of course nothing can be better than to charge his estates for the money precisely that he wants, which he can get for 3¼ to 3½ per cent.

The currency.

7530. (*Mr. Giffen.*) I should like to ask you about your evidence as to your theory in prices, and about the remedy for it in the double standard, and I should like to begin so that we may understand each other, by asking in what sense you use the phrase, "Appreciation of gold"?—I do not pretend to be an authority upon those matters. I am simply a believer in it.

7531. In what sense do you use the phrase "Appreciation of gold"?—I say that there is now infinitely less gold producible and useable for the purpose of currency than there was in 1854 and 1856, and up to 1864 and 1865. Gold is used in so many other directions than it was formerly, so that a great quantity of gold is taken away from currency purposes for those purposes. I am told that dentistry alone takes something like 6,000,000*l.* of gold yearly.

7532. But I understand you to say that you have certain monetary changes in your mind, which had caused the appreciation of gold. What were those monetary changes?—I do not think they were monetary changes which had caused the appreciation of gold. What I intended to convey was this: that gold had appreciated because many more uses for it had been found than existed before, and consequently the purchasing power of gold was far greater than it was in former times.

7533. But it was not monetary uses that you had in your mind?—Will you kindly define what you mean by monetary.

7534. Monetary uses would simply mean that it was for currency purposes more now than in 1854; is that your meaning?—That gold is used more for currency purposes now than in 1854.

7535. Before 1870?—I should think there is a larger quantity of gold in circulation now than in 1854, because of the discoveries made at that time, but when one thinks how enormously the commerce of this country, and other parts of the world, have extended concurrently, there is not available for use for currency the same quantity of gold as before.

7536. But you ascribe that to general causes and increase of population—the use of gold in the arts, and you do not ascribe it to changes which different governments have made in the money?—I do ascribe the demonetisation of silver by Germany to be a very large factor in the matter, and also the action of the United States Government. I do not profess to be an authority upon questions of this kind. I have simply read, and have concluded from my reading most distinctly that the operation of the single standard has had, under the conditions which have existed during the last 25 years, a most maleficant influence on prices.

7537. But you do not agree that it is chiefly the changes which have been made by the different Governments of the world which have caused gold to be so much in demand?—I think that is one of the factors.

7538. But not the chief factor?—I should hesitate to describe the proportion.

7539. In what way would the double standard be of advantage now to the farming interests, is it to raise prices?—It is to raise prices undoubtedly, to bring them to a more reasonable relation to the cost of production.

7540. In what way would it raise the prices?—If I had a farm growing 100 sacks of wheat, and I was under contract with my landlord to pay him 75*l.* in sovereigns as the rent of my farm, I would have greater difficulty to get my 75 sovereigns to pay him his rent which I am under contract to pay him in gold now than I would under former circumstances.

7541. Why?—Because my 100 sacks of wheat will not realise anything like what they did before.

7542. How do you think that the double standard would enable you to get more than 75 sovereigns?—I think first of all that the appreciation of gold has depreciated prices to an extent which I will not venture to measure, because I am not competent.

7543. In other words, the appreciation of gold and the depreciation of prices are the same things, our prices being in gold?—Yes.

7544. How is your remedy going to raise prices?—The remedy would be that there would be an increased volume of currency.

7545. Are you quite sure?—I believe so.

7546. Or do prices depend at all upon the currency?—I think they do depend upon currency. I remember the suspension of the Bank Charter Act in 1846. You could sell nothing; you could not sell sheep, or cotton, or wool. Shares were nil. The Bank Charter Act was suspended and in 24 hours confidence and happiness were restored.

7547. That is a change of credit and not of currency?—We were not one iota richer by the suspension of the Act.

7548. It was a change of credit?—And an increase in the volume of currency.

7549. Not an increase in the volume of currency?—There was not, when the suspension of the Bank Charter Act occurred, enough gold to allow the Government to issue notes beyond their authority.

7550. You will find that there was no increase in the volume of currency?—But the ability was there, the credit was there.

7551. That is a different term; you say an increase in the volume of currency is going to raise prices?—But it did operate in the one case in 24 hours; on the Black Friday there was no traffic; there was no commerce.

7552. Because, according to what you say, there was a change of credit, and not a change in currency?—The credit was as good as currency.

7553. That I quite agree with—credit for certain purposes, but it is not the same thing?—The country believed, if the Bank of England issued notes under the suspended Bank Charter Act they would be paid. They could not be paid in gold.

7554. But credit and currency are not the same things?—I am afraid I am not able to deal with this important question you are raising as to currency, I only tell you my authority.

7555. I want to have a distinct idea of how the application of the double standard would raise prices?—In the direction that I have named. If a debt is payable in two standards, one, say, absolutely depreciated, and not available for paying debts, and the other appreciated and proportionately scarce, that if those two standards are employed, there would be a greater facility for a man to meet his obligations than under the present system.

7556. Not as great facilities as the man who writes a cheque?—But that cheque means gold that would be paid.

7557. It is not a want of currency then that makes it difficult for him to pay his rent?—I think it is.

Farms under management.

7558. (*Chairman.*) I have one or two more questions to ask. Your evidence to-day has been mainly in respect of farms in the counties of Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Hampshire, and Wiltshire?—Yes.

7559. Are those, as a rule, arable farms?—There would be over the districts that you have named something like 60 per cent. of arable land.

7560. And they would be called arable farms in the main?—Yes.

7561. To some extent it would be laid down in grass, and, therefore, there would be more pasture?—A certain proportion would be laid down to grass.

7562. You told us that when it was reduced in respect of smaller farms not over 400 acres, it was reduced from 20 to 30 per cent.?—Yes.

7563. And in the case of the larger farms it was reduced from 35 to 45, and even 50 per cent.?—Yes.

7564. And you told us that you had 15,000 acres in hand?—Yes.

7565. What proportion does that form of the whole under your management?—I am ashamed to say I cannot answer it.

7566. Is it a 5th or 6th or 10th, or what; I want some idea, because 15,000 is a large amount, but I want to know if it is large in proportion to the total acreage under your management?—I will give you the actual figures, and add it to my evidence. (*See* Appendix A., XXIV.)

Difficulties in letting large farms.

7567. It is in these large farms that you have mainly found the difficulty of letting?—Yes.

7568. And that has been due to the difficulty of finding men with capital large enough to work those farms?—Quite so; and, further to the unprofitable character of the undertaking under present conditions, and an indisposition generally to go into farming.

Rent.

7569. What would you say was generally the average rent per acre at the present time in respect of the smaller farms, is it 15*s.* or 18*s.*?—Under 15*s.* per acre—about 12*s.* per acre—not more than that.

7570. I presume a tenant coming into one of those farms at the present times comes under great advantages, he buys his stock and implements at a very low price?—There is a very great inducement at the present moment to go into farming.

7571. There are many adjustments favourable to the tenant?—I hope so.

7572. But all depending upon the present prices?—Yes.

7573. He pays much less for his stock and implements, and then his tithe is greatly reduced, not quite so much as you think it ought to be, but still by 34 per cent.?—Yes.

7574. I presume that the assessment of land has been reduced?—Yes, moderately.

Rates.

7575. And the rates are less?—Certainly; they are less than they were 20 years ago.

7576. And the assessments are less?—The assessments are less, I mean the actual payment in respect of poor rates is decidedly less.

7577. Then as to manures and everything that he has to purchase; they are also less?—Yes; but I should supplement my remarks by saying that there are certain charges which are not less, which have been thrown upon him within the last 20 years.

7578. In the case of rates?—Yes.

7579. But, on the other hand, there has been some alleviation in the shape of contributions?—Certainly; but still there has been a sensible appreciable increment of payment by the occupier, and ultimately by the landowner in the shape of rates beyond those which, I think, are perfectly rightly chargeable and fair to be paid by the freehold, that is, the poor rates.

7580. Is it within your knowledge that the assessments have been reduced in proportion to the rent?—Invariably.

7581. Therefore the tenant comes under considerable advantages?—There are those advantages.

Prospects of farming.

7582. Now, supposing the present prices remain, is it possible, in your opinion, coming in under those circumstances, that a tenant can make the thing pay?—I am not a pessimist; I believe that farming will go on. The action of the depression has been to throw out of cultivation those lands, the profit of the management of which was very moderate indeed. The margin of profit on that land has absolutely disappeared in cultivation. Of course, it has other uses, and to those uses it will be applied; but even with a persistent 26*s.* per quarter for wheat, and 27*s.* per quarter for barley, and 1*l.* or 18*s.* per quarter for oats, I do not believe that English land, under fair and reasonable conditions, with a farm properly equipped, will go out of cultivation; it will be farmed.

7583. In other words, there is still an inducement at those rates, and at present rents, for tenants to take the land?—I think there is.

7584. And that they can make a living out of it?—I do not know that, but they will try.

7585. But supposing it were otherwise, there is still a margin of rent?—A very much lessened rent.

Charges on land.

7586. Less than formerly: but still a margin of rent on which to draw. I understood you to say that rent has been reduced 30 to 40 per cent. in some cases, and consequently there is still the remaining 60 to 70 per cent., and if a reduction of 30 to 40 per cent. has been sufficient to bring the adjustment to a point—if 30 or 40 per cent. reduction were made, it would make a very great difference?—But I should say that the remaining 50 or 55 per cent. is still subject to the terrible fixed charges on land.

7587. But these do not affect the tenant?—If you are dealing with the tenants alone that would be so.

7588. (*Lord Cobham.*) You include the upkeep of the estate?—That has to be maintained. Practically estates are not kept up as they were.

7589. That affects the tenants?—That affects the tenant in a more or less degree.

Bad seasons.

7590. (*Chairman.*) But still I mean the tenant is not affected by the fixed charges; I am not dealing with the maintenance of the property, but the fixed charges. I presume the last few years have been exceptionally bad?—The seasons have been exceptionally bad to the farmer, but 1893 was a most enjoyable year.

7591. But for agriculture it was excessively bad, and the previous year was even worse?—It was not so bad in our district, certainly; it took another form.

7592. Whereas in 1892 you had a very wet season, and in 1893 it was a very dry season, and in both years the production was very small?—The gross produce was very seriously reduced.

7593. Then the farmers have had the enormous disadvantage of two excessively bad years?—Two very bad years.

Concessions to tenants.

7594. Have you had greater arrears of rent for those years?—Our clients have generally adopted the suggestion that, instead of abatement of rent, we should make presents to meet exceptional seasons.

7595. That is practically the same thing; it is only an abatement under another name?—But it would not be included in those abatements of rent.

7596. It is over and above the reduction of rent; you have had to make those special?—Yes, we have had to make presents of 20 to 25 per cent. to the tenants.

7597. (*Mr. Clay.*) Over and above the repairs?—Over and above the repairs.

Comparison between 1892-3 and 1879.

7598. (*Chairman.*) In 1892 and 1893, having regard to both production and prices they were even worse than in 1879?—Except that we did not get the sheep rot in those last two years. In 1879 thousands and thousands of sheep were rotted and swept off the face of the earth.

7599. But for arable farms which produce corn the year 1892 must have been as bad as 1879?—Not quite. In 1879 there was a promise of a crop, but it was absolutely spoilt in the harvest.

7600. From the return I have before me the actual production of wheat per acre in 1879 was only 16 bushels, and the price was 46*s*., and the return, therefore, per acre was 4*l*. 12*s*. In 1892 the production of wheat was 26 bushels to the acre, and the price was 26*s*. and the result per acre was 4*l*. 8*s*., worse even than in 1879?—Quite so.

7601. The question I have to ask you is this, inasmuch as these figures show what was formerly the state of things, namely, that prices rose in proportion to the bad produce?—In some degree; not in full proportion.

7602. In some degree; it has not been the rule, but the low prices remain even though the product is very low; do you think that rents have been reduced sufficiently in consideration of that?—I should hesitate to use the word "sufficiently." As I have said, it is a question entirely of settling the terms between landlord and tenant, and the higgling of the market settles it better.

7603. But is it not almost beyond the expectation of anybody that two such bad years as 1892 and 1893 should succeed one another?—Certainly.

7604. And combining with this very large production that price should remain also so very low?—Certainly. I think the two seasons have been more disappointing to the farmers than many seasons for many years; the confluence of those two seasons has broken their hearts.

7605. Of course it was beyond the expectation of landlords and tenants that two such years should occur?—Certainly.

7606. And the question is whether, having regard to the possibility of two such years occurring again, rents have been sufficiently reduced?—If such seasons continue I do not think farming would probably go on as in the past.

Tithe.

7607. With regard to the tithe, I think you said that, generally speaking, the tithe is apportioned by farms?—Not generally; it is generally field apportionment.

7608. Now in the case of a farm where a field is allowed to go out of cultivation, and where the apportionment has been by the field, does the tithe cease in respect of that field?—If there is a special apportionment of that field of course it would be in those cases in which the operation of the compromise that I have suggested would obtain.

7609. I am not now talking of a possible compromise, but of the actual state of the law at present; supposing in the case of a farm where the tithe is apportioned by the field, one field goes out of cultivation, does the tithe cease to be payable in respect of that field?—I cannot tell you. That would be a technical legal question that I could not answer.

7610. It seems to me to be an important question?—It is a very important question. I apprehend if there is a field apportionment that the eighth section would apply.

7611. You do not know of any case of that kind?—I do not.

7612. It seems to be a matter for serious consideration. Then it would seem to follow as a matter of principle, that, where the tithe is apportioned, say on each farm and not by the field, then if a portion of the farm goes out of cultivation, there should be some process by which the tenant should be relieved of the tithe, in respect of the portion of the farm which has gone out of cultivation?—Clearly, because in that event the whole area being chargeable in one sum for the tithe, the tithe owner would be perfectly safe, because he can go over the whole area to collect his tithe.

Expenditure on improvements.

7613. (*Lord Vernon.*) You say that improvements are not so readily carried out on large estates as they were, did you not say so?—Yes, at least we find that our volume of business—— Do you refer to improvements under the Act?

7614. No, I mean the estate repairs. What I want to know from your great experience on farms is this: are not the lands on which improvements have been effected in the good years better equipped for farming than they were before the depression?—No doubt they are; they are sufficiently equipped, there is really no large sum of money required to be expended in improvements except drainage; it has been very nearly done. Upon road making occasionally there is something done.

Tithe.

7615. (*Mr. Little.*) One question arising out of an answer that you gave to Mr. Lambert. You said that it would be desirable that the Board of Agriculture should inquire into any case where there was a complaint of the tithe being unduly high. I presume you would put some limits to that when you say "unduly high," it would be in proportion to the rent?—I was referring to that particular case where the tithe was 112*l*. and the rent 100*l*. including tithe.

7616. You would make it a condition of inquiry into an alteration of the tithe, that the tithe should be something like the rent or something approaching the rent; you would not, because a man was dissatisfied with the amount of the tithe, allow the question to be re-opened?—No; there are a very large proportion of cases still subsisting where the tithe is a perfectly fair and equitable charge upon the land; it is only in the case where it presses with undue weight in proportion to the capacity to produce on the land that I would interfere with it.

7617. I felt sure of your meaning, that it was not a general inquiry that you wanted?—Oh, no.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

Fifteenth Day.

Friday, 16th February 1894.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., in the Chair.

Viscount Cobham.
The Right Hon. Baron Vernon.
The Right Hon. Henry Chaplin, M.P.
Sir Robert Nigel Fitzhardinge Kingscote, K.C.B.
Robert Giffen, Esq., C.B.
Captain Owen Thomas.

Francis Allston Channing, Esq., M.P.
John Clay, Esq.
Cornelius Neale Dalton, Esq., C.B.
Robert Lacey Everett, Esq., M.P.
John Gilmour, Esq.
George Lambert, Esq., M.P.
William Cutlack Little, Esq.

Herbert Lyon, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. Crawford, Esq., } *Assistant*
Freeman Thomas, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. Oliver D. Johnson called and examined.

7618. (*Chairman.*) You are owner and occupier of land in Suffolk?—Yes.

7619. And you are also the representative of the Ixworth Farmers' Club, and Vice-Chairman of the Suffolk County Council?—Yes.

7620. And you come here on behalf of your association, I presume?—Yes.

7621. How much land do you own?—320 acres.

7622. And you rent besides 1,380 acres?—Yes.

7623. And you farm the whole of it?—Yes.

7624. Is it chiefly arable land?—Yes, chiefly.

Condition of agriculture.

7625. What has been your experience as a farmer during the last few years?—My experience is that with the prices gradually going down the farming interest generally has been placed in very great difficulties. For the matter of that, many tenants have had to go under water and the owners have also been, many of them, placed in difficulties. A great many of them have given up their residences and their sporting, and are living elsewhere.

Reduction of rent.

7626. Taking your case have you had considerable reductions of rent?—Latterly I have.

7627. When did the reductions begin?—Some of the reductions began seven years ago, I might say eight years ago.

7628. Not so far back as 1879?—No.

7629. About 1885, 1886, and 1887?—It would begin about 1881 and 1882.

7630. I presume they commenced with abatements of rents and then they were made permanent?—That is so.

7631. When were they made permanent?—I have not the figures by me, but they were made permanent some three or four years ago. I got a permanent reduction, and those reductions have been increased. I say that in my own particular case it was through an application for a reduction of rent, and that application has been acceded to.

7632. What did your rent stand at before the reduction on the 1,380 acres?—Perhaps if you would allow me I might put it before you a little more clearly; there has been some alteration in the acreage of the lands which I occupy; the farm on which I live did consist of some 1,150 acres and of that some 20 acres have been planted, so that now it would consist of about 1,130 acres. The rent was at the highest times, that would be in 1870 we will say, 1,300*l.* a year plus the tithe.

Tithe.

7633. Is the tithe heavy there?—It is heavy there; it is 5*s.* 6*s.* or 7*s.* an acre—say 5*s.* to 7*s.* an acre on that farm; no great reductions were made in the rent until seven or eight years ago. The greatest reduction has been made from last Michaelmas. I did not know that I should be asked the exact figures referring to my own occupation, or I should have been provided with notes to refer to. There had been reductions made previous to last Michaelmas in the rent from Michaelmas 1892. The rent at Michaelmas 1893 was 1,130*l.*, and the rent at the present moment is 850*l.* as from Michaelmas.

7634. The landlord paying the tithe?—The landlord paying the tithe. I might say as to the rent in previous years that whereas the 1,130*l.* last year included the tithe, the 1,300*l.* did not include the tithe.

7635. If you take the tithe at 5*s.* per acre, which is rather less than it is, I suppose?—Yes.

Rent.

7636. That would make the present rent to the landlord 525*l.* roughly speaking; that is to say, there has been some little reduction in acreage; and considering that also, it is about 500*l.* a year as compared with 1,300*l.*?—Yes, that is so.

7637. And is this a permanent reduction now?—Yes. I mean to say it is a hiring subject to 12 months' notice at Michaelmas.

7638. It is not merely an abatement?—Not an abatement, it is a re-hiring.

7639. As the rent has fallen has your assessment been reduced in the same proportion as the rent has been reduced?—The assessment is now somewhere about equal to the rent.

7640. And what was it when the rent was 1,300*l.*, was it then equal to the rent?—I do not think it was—not quite.

7641. May that be taken as a test of the land in the neighbourhood?—Well, the land in the neighbourhood varies, and there is a variation in the rent. The changes in the rental of the land vary very much according to the position and what the land is. I have one or two cases that I might quote to the Commission from reliable sources with regard to the rent. My informants do not desire that their names should appear in the press, but they do not object to their being given to the Commission for the purpose of identifying the accuracy of any statements that I might make. I might say as to the reductions in rent that one somewhat large landowner in the county, (he is a well known man, and he owns land in a great many different parts of the county, and therefore his land would be very variable), told me that where he used to receive 100*l.* in rent he now receives 30*l.* I am prepared to give his name for your private information if you wish.

7642. That seems to be very much the case with your landlord; because your rent has been reduced about 50 per cent.?—Yes.

7643.—But the case you are now mentioning is rather more than that?—Yes; my landlord, I take it now, receives about 600*l.* where he did receive 1,300*l.* —that is about really what it is, allowing 250*l.* for the tithe.

7644. (*Lord Vernon.*) 525*l.* as against 1,300*l.*?—1,300*l.* at the highest time. I am taking the highest rental at 1,330*l.*, there is some land taken off.

7645. (*Chairman.*) Your own rent has been reduced about 50 per cent., and the case you are now mentioning is about 70 per cent.?—Yes, that is information given me by a landlord who is a man owning land in many different parts of the county, and whose information can be thoroughly relied upon. I am not prepared to give his name except for private information.

7646. Has he considerable property?—Yes.

7647. You said that the reductions varied very much according to the nature and position of the land?—Yes.

Reduced value of land.

7648. Is there anything favourable in your own case which has prevented the reductions being so great as in that case?—Well, the land that I occupy is partly mixed soil, partly heavy and partly light land—that I consider to be somewhat of an advantage to a farmer. Then it is fairly near the rail, it is within two miles of a railway station—some of it is less than that, so that I might say it is within a mile-and-a-half to two miles of a station, and through being a farm situated so that stock can be carried, and also vegetables, which are grown to some extent, as well as growing corn, the reduction of rent is not quite so great. But if I might be allowed to place it before you as bearing upon the value of land in the county I have in my hand some information which has been given me by a gentleman who has purchased some land in the county recently. One farm I could mention which 20 years ago was sold for 13,000*l.*; it consisted of 240 acres, two homesteads, five cottages, and a good class of buildings; in 1873 this farm was sold for 13,000*l.*, it was bought by a yeoman farmer, and he farmed it himself; he raised on this farm 9,000*l.* on mortgage, the mortgagees seized the property, and last year it was sold for 1,800*l.*, the freehold was sold for 1,800*l.* by the mortgagees. There are 240 acres, and it is a freehold farm with about two-thirds of the land tax redeemed; it is subject to a tithe with the exception of 17 acres, the tithe being now at about 5*s.* 6*d.*

7649. Was there anything exceptional about that farm to account for this extraordinary reduction?—I know of nothing to account for it except its being a sale forced by the mortgagee, and there not being a demand at the time for farms on account of the existing state of things. I know of nothing else.

7650. Is the new owner farming it himself?—Yes.

7651. That was a forced sale and someone has made a good bargain?—I should think so. But I have another case, so that it is not a solitary one.

7652. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is it a good sporting farm? —I think there is not very much sporting on it. There is another farm of 107 acres, all freehold except five acres; the tithe is about 4*s.* an acre, and it was sold some years back for 3,000*l.*; a sum of 2,500*l.* was advanced on this farm on mortgage; last summer the mortgagee determined to realise, and by his direction this farm was sold for 450*l.*

7653. Was it bought by a man who intends farming it himself?—I do not know the present purchaser.

7654. On account of the uncertainty of prices there was no demand, and then by this forced sale the mortgagees were compelled to take what they could get at the moment?—My informant here does not wish his name to be published, but if you wish to have it to identify this he will be willing to give it; he is a well-known county man. He writes with regard to this matter: "These are extreme cases; but I could give you a dozen more very nearly as bad."

7655. (*Lord Vernon.*) Did this farm require a great deal of money to be spent upon it to put it in repair or was it in good order?—The first one was in good order and the homestead was in good order, and it was in a good situation so far as the high road is concerned, and it was a desirable description of land. With regard to the latter one I do not know as to the condition so well.

7656. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) These are not exceptional cases? —My informant says they are exceptional, but he could quote a dozen more very nearly as bad.

7657. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is not the low price because of the heavy tithe, which is the first charge upon it, as compared with land with a light tithe?—Of course the tithe would make a difference.

7658. Would it not make a great difference in the capitalised amount?—It does make a difference, but I do not think that it makes all the difference of the capitalised amount.

Farm losses.

7659. (*Chairman.*) If those values are to be taken as at all average prices, it would seem to indicate that the rents of land in the hands of tenant farmers must be very high as compared with the interest on the purchase money?—It would, judging by the opinion expressed by me with regard to that arable farm, but from the description of the farm, and my informant being a man who is well known and who knows the value of land in the county, and on whom I can rely, I can only think that did he desire it he could let that farm as I have stated, viz., at 15*s.* per acre. I cannot imagine otherwise. It is desirable land and in a good situation, and it shows this, that where there is a forced sale by the mortgagee in our county, at any rate just at the present time and during last year, it is difficult to say how great is the depreciation, and how great a sacrifice may be made of property. As to the condition from the tenants' point of view, if you desire a case in point I can give you the result of five years' farming in my neighbourhood, the case of a heavy land farm of 350 acres. It has been farmed for five years from Michaelmas, 1888, to Michaelmas, 1893, by a good business man, and it has resulted in a loss during those five years of 1,523*l.*

7660. What was the rent there?—This was jointly farmed by the owner and a friend of the owner together in partnership, and the owner charged his rent, I take it, as interest upon the purchase money.

7661. Is that included in the 1,523*l.*?—A sum would be deducted for the rent and interest upon the capital invested before that 1,523*l.* was arrived at. There are some charges, I think, calculated in that sum. The rent of this farm would be from 10*s.* to 12*s.* an acre.

Changes of tenancy.

7662. Have there been any changes of tenancy generally in your district?—Yes, a great many.

7663. And have the farms been relet at greatly reduced rentals?—Yes; several of them have been in the hands of the owners for a year or so, and then they have let them at greatly reduced rentals.

Land in hand.

7664. Is there also land in the hands of the owners now unlet, or have they been generally let at a reduction?—On some of the farming lands they have not been let, but they would be generally light lands. There were a great many farms in my immediate neighbourhood in hand until some two years ago, and the owner then determined to let as best he could, and he did at a greatly reduced rental.

7665. He kept the land, not being willing to let it a great reduction, but at last found himself compelled to do so?—That is so.

7666. Do you know whether the reduction in this case was about 50 per cent.?—Quite that; and more too, in many cases.

7667. And have the rents been reduced in the same proportion on farms which have remained in the occupation of old tenants?—I should think nearly so now; I think they have now.

Rates.

7668. Generally, should you say that in that district the assessments have been reduced in proportion to the rent?—In some cases they are above the rent; they are being reduced.

7669. And has the per-centage of the rates remained the same?—There may in some, but not in all cases, be an increase in the rates. The grants of taxes which are now allocated and paid over to the county councils amount to a sum larger than that which used to be paid to the county authorities directly from the Imperial Exchequer previous to the passing of the Local Government Act of 1888. Those sums, which we now receive through the tax allocated for local purposes, and which are paid over to the county councils are considerably in excess of the grants from the Imperial Exchequer in aid of the charges before that date. That benefit has prevented, in my judgment, to some considerable extent an increase in the rates.

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7670. How much in the £ are your rates now?—The Poor Rates are about 2*s.* in the £, and the Highway Rate varies very much. It would vary from 8*d.* to over 2*s.*

7671. Do you mean from year to year?—If you mean my own rates, my rates would amount to 2*s.* 9*d.*

7672. What was it 12 or 14 years ago, before this depression arose; was it about the same?—Yes; there would not be a great difference.

7673. The benefit of the contributions from the Imperial Exchequer has prevented the rise in the rates, which have been due to the lower rate of the assessment?—That has been so; but the lowering of the assessment has only recently come into operation. One considerable reduction in the assessment only came into operation since Christmas. It has not yet began to work, as the reduction has just now taken place.

7674. Still your last rate was no more in the £ than it was some years ago?—That is so.

7675. And it would have been higher, you think, but for the contributions from the Imperial Exchequer?—That is so.

7676. At all events you and your neighbours must have derived a considerable benefit from the reduction in the aggregate payment of rates in consequence of the reduction of the assessment?—Yes; they would, slightly.

Wages.

7677. What has been the case with wages in your district?—From a year ago wages have fallen some 11 per cent.

7678. Up to that time had they been maintained?—Not to their highest pitch.

7679. When was the highest point attained?—In 1880, I should think, or 1876 and 1877.

7680. What was it then?—I have not the figures by me; I might say, as a guide for the Commission, that the wages of the ordinary day labourer, paid by me at the highest point, were 13*s.* per week. I am speaking of what we term the ordinary day labourer; that is the monetary day's pay; there are a great many things to be taken into account.

7681. That does not represent the full earnings, but for purposes of comparison it will suffice?—Quite so; the ordinary day labourer's pay at the highest point was 13*s.*; that would be 2*s.* 2*d.* a day, and is now 10*s.* per week.

7682. When did it fall from 13*s.* to the point to which it has fallen; was it 12*s.* for a little time?—Yes; it has been 12*s.*; 11*s.*; and now it has fallen to 10*s.* per week.

7683. Altogether the fall since the depression has arisen has been 3*s.* per week, or nearly 20 per cent?—Yes.

Unculti-vated land.

7684. Now, has much land fallen out of cultivation in your district?—There are a good deal of the poorer lands which have gone out of cultivation.

7685. Is that in the sense that the farm altogether has gone out of cultivation, or that parts of the farm have gone out of cultivation?—They have gone out of cultivation more or less in some cases of the poorer lands, but only a very small portion. On some portion of the heavier lands, in many cases, farmers put down a large portion of seeds, and allow them to lie, perhaps, two or three years. In some cases they do not cultivate the poor fields, but let them go, and take advantage of them as long as they grow anything.

7686. Have any farms become derelict in the sense of not being farmed at all?—Not at the present time. I knew a case of a farm which lay vacant for a year, and then it was taken up. I have a case here of a small farm, quite near me, that was uncultivated for several years, but it is now being cultivated.

7687. As a general rule when you speak of land out of cultivation, it means the inferior parts of farms have been allowed to fall into poor grass farms?—This is so as a general rule.

7688. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) And does that apply to the whole of Suffolk?—Yes; I should think the larger portion of Suffolk.

7689. Do I understand that there is no land out of cultivation in Suffolk?—Oh, yes, there is.

7690. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What does that land produce, anything at all?—In some places it produces game, and some rabbits—rabbits principally.

7691. Is it let as pasture?—Well, just to the north of me there is a large tract of poor light land; those lands were all cultivated and tenanted 20 years ago; now there are very few tenants; and there is a large tract, a good many miles across, which is principally in the owner's hands. The owner gets some rabbits, and some sporting perhaps, but he does not get very much else.

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Drainage and claying.

7692. (*Chairman.*) Has the drainage of heavy land been maintained or not?—I do not think it has; on a good deal of heavy land the drainage has not been kept up, it is not done so well. A tenant farmer in many places has not the money to invest, and in the next case he would be inclined to ask himself whether he would receive a return for the outlay with present prices.

7693. Has the light land been clayed?—I have not seen the light land clayed for a long time.

Expenditure on improvements.

7694. Has there also been expenditure by the landlords to keep their tenants, or to induce new tenants to take the land?—In some cases there has been. Landlords have spent money and have not always had a return for it.

7695. They have endeavoured to keep their tenants in that way?—They have in some cases.

7696. In your own case has the owner of your land expended any money in improvement?—Some 20 or 25 years ago new buildings were put up and repairs done, but not to a very great extent.

Deterioration in farming.

7697. Taking the general condition of farming, has that deteriorated?—The farming is not so well done as it used to be. For the reasons I have stated the draining is not so well done, nor the claying so well done; the claying of light land I have not seen done for a long time.

Bad seasons.

7698. Have the last two seasons been very bad in the way of production in your district?—The last season very much so. The season before was not a very good one, but the last season was bad. It is very variable, and is dreadfully bad in some districts.

7699. But you have not suffered from the wet seasons of 1892?—No; we did not suffer very much from the wet season of 1892, but more from the drought of 1893.

7700. There were very exceptional losses in that year?—Yes; very exceptional losses.

Tenure.

7701. What is the general system of tenure in your district; are the farms generally let on a yearly agreement?—Generally, the system of tenure used to be that of leases, but as the leases have fallen out tenants have been very loth to enter upon a lease. There is no desire to enter upon a lease. I think they are afraid of entering upon a lease with the present prices.

Restrictions.

7702. There has been a relaxation of the restrictions on cultivation, and of other usual covenants of the agreement, has there not?—Whether they have been actually in writing I am not prepared to say; but, practically, farmers now can cultivate or do pretty well as they like, provided they keep the land in good condition, and leave it in shift, that is, part corn and part roots and seeds. In this county the farmers in my district farm the four course, having part in corn, part in seeds, and part in roots. If a man cultivates his farm well, the majority of the owners do not object to the tenant doing what he likes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

7703. With regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act, has there been any complaint of it in your district?—My impression is that tenants do not generally claim under that; they are afraid that if they did do so, the owner might make a counter claim. It is rather difficult to my mind for a tenant to prove whether a farm was in perfect condition when he entered it, but an owner looks and expects to find the farm in perfect condition when he goes out of it, if any claim is made by the tenant for anything that he has done.

7704. In recent years when farms have been given up, have they been deteriorated?—In some cases.

7705. And possibly it may be that the outgoing tenants have been afraid of the counter claims?—They would, of course, where the farm was in very bad condition. I do not think it has worked very much. I do not know of many claims under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

Suffolk custom.

7706. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What do they claim under?—There is a Suffolk custom, that an outgoing tenant is paid for his tillages on the fallows. The Suffolk custom is this: that a tenant for his fallow land, instead of being paid for the crop of roots which he will leave on the land, is paid for the tillages, ploughing, and seeds, and manures, and in some cases the rent and rates, but not in all cases; that is the Suffolk custom.

7707. (*Chairman.*) Then you consider the Suffolk custom to be rather better than the scheme of compensation under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I do not know that. The Agricultural Holdings Act would include that, and would go further; and would give some further compensation than does the Suffolk custom. But under the custom, if he has done recent draining, he would be compensated for that. It goes to some considerable extent on the lines of the Agricultural Holdings Act, but not quite so far. Might I make one remark as to the fall in the price of labour?

Cost of labour.

7708. Yes?—I do not think that fall in the price of labour is altogether 20 per cent., although it might be. I do not think that the fall in piecework has been so much as that. There is a great deal of piecework done, but I do not think it has fallen 20 per cent. There was a considerable fall in harvest wages. Harvest wages are always paid by the piece, and there was a considerable fall last harvest time; an irregular and very considerable fall, but I do not think that fall has amounted to 20 per cent.

7709. Do you mean taking it all round;—Yes; not quite 20 per cent.

7710. But approaching 20 per cent.—more than 15 per cent.?—Well, all piecework included, perhaps 15 per cent.

Causes of the depression.

7711. To what do you attribute the depression?—I attribute the depression to foreign competition, and to the change in the currency, which has taken place during the last 25 years. I consider those two great factors in the case.

7712. Then you think it has close relation to the monetary question?—I do think it has a very close relation to the monetary question.

7713. What remedy do you suggest?—That an English agriculturist should be placed, as near as possible, on the same footing as his foreign competitor.

Poor, highway, and education rates.

7714. In what respect?—I take it that in the United States of America, or for the matter of that in India, the poor rates and highway rates are not there in existence, and I think that these charges on land which it is possible to remove should be removed. I look upon it that the maintenance of the poor, the education of the people, and the maintenance of the highways, are matters in which the nation is interested, and for which the nation should pay. I do not think that a man, merely because he happens to be an occupier of land, should have to pay the large proportion which he now pays in finding the necessary funds for national expenditure and for national purposes.

Local management.

7715. Do you think that the management of the poor and of the highways, should be taken out of the hands of the local authorities, and placed in the hands of the Imperial authorities?—That is another matter; whether they would be better in their hands is another matter. With regard to the question of management I do not suppose that the occupiers would object to the management being in other hands, if they provide a large share of the money.

7716. It would follow, as a matter of course, that if the payment is to be made by the Imperial Exchequer, the management must be Imperial?—Yes.

7717. And that would mean taking all these matters out of the local management?—Yes.

The currency.

7718. What further do you recommend?—As to the currency question, if I might say a word upon that now, I believe that by the change which took place some 20 years ago, when silver was abandoned as a standard by a great many European countries, there was a reduction made in the circulating medium of the world, and that that had the effect of reducing prices. I do not know that I have any authority to speak on a matter of this kind, but I have formed my own idea, and I have thought that that is one of the causes of agriculture suffering from low prices. I have thought that prices are ruled by three factors; one of those is the supply, and the second is the demand, and the third is the amount of circulating medium by which they are measured. I have always thought that, if there is a large heap of gold, and a little heap of wheat, or any other agricultural commodity, whatever it may be, the agriculturist would stand a better chance of getting gold out of that large heap than out of a small one. Whether that is right or wrong, I take it that during this century whenever there has been an increase or decrease of the circulating medium, there appears to have followed in the wake of it a rise or fall in prices. I also imagine that if we go a long way back, some 200 or 300 years, when a bullock was sold for 5*s.* and 10*s.*, and a sheep for 2*s.* 6*d.*, we find that there was only a small amount of the circulating medium, and that the prices then received have fallen very much in accordance with the amount of the circulating medium which has come into existence. I think myself that the owners of property and of commodities, whether they be land or whether they be agricultural produce, have a just right to complain (if my theory is right), that these prices have fallen, not by the natural course of things, but by the arbitrary tampering with the circulating medium by the different Governments and States of the world. That interference with the owners of land and property as against the owners of money, has placed them in a disadvantageous position on the contracts which have been entered into and which have to be carried out by the payment of gold, a larger amount of goods being required to realise that gold in order to pay these contracts.

7719. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You could not give us now the statement of the circulating medium 20 years ago, and how much it was reduced by those measures?—I could not give a statement; that is a matter which only one who has given the subject great consideration might do.

7720. You said it was reduced, and I wished to know if you have any idea as to how much it was reduced?—There is an output of gold which varies, which has not greatly increased during the last few years, and as silver has been displaced entirely, I take it that gold is to stand in the place that silver occupied in those various countries which formerly used silver and are now using gold. Therefore there is a greater demand for gold. I do not gather that gold has increased in supply in order to meet that demand.

7721. I do not wish to cross-examine you just now, but I merely wish to get out of you whether you could give any statement as to how much the circulating medium of the world has been reduced?—I cannot tell you how much it has been reduced.

7722. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You have not examined into the figures and you do not come here to give the details?—I do not come here as a specialist.

The Merchandise Marks Act.

7723. (*Chairman.*) What further changes do you recommend?—I think that something should be done in order to insure that English agricultural produce should be sold as such, or rather that imported agricultural produce should be sold as such in all cases; that the purchaser should always know whether he was buying foreign agricultural produce or whether he was buying English; that is, in other words, that there should be an extension of the Merchandise Marks Act.

Markets.

7724. With regard to markets, have you any suggestion to make?—As to markets, the vegetable market in London, one of them at any rate, I happen to know something about. The owner of the market holds a charter, and under that charter he has the power to prevent anybody else opening a market within a certain radius, and I think that radius is a very considerable one. By that means a grower of vegetables in the eastern counties is prevented from placing them in the hands of the consumer at as small a cost as he would otherwise do were it not for that charter. I might state that in a very plain way, so that you might see clearly what I mean. If a market was attached to the Great Eastern Railway—and I speak of that because I live on that line—if a market was attached to the railway station so that vegetables could be placed from the trucks directly into the greengrocers' carts or handed over to those requiring them, the produce of an acre of potatoes, for instance, could be so delivered at some 10*s.* an acre, at any rate, less than they could be now, when they have to be delivered into Spitalfields Market. The cartage from the rail into the market would now amount in potatoes—I take that as a typical case—to 10*s.* per acre. That would be the cartage of the potatoes from the rail into the market. In the case of other vegetables such as cabbages and lettuce, there is not only the cost of conveyance from the railway into the market, but the damage in transit. One can easily understand that cabbages and green stuff in being taken from the truck into the van and from the van into the market have to

Spitalfields Market.

be handled, and there is not only the expense of porterage, but the damage done to the property itself. I do not myself wish unduly to interfere with vested rights, but I do think that the time has come when a charter of so old a date as that which the owner of Spitalfields Market possesses, and under which he exercises authority, should not prevent the grower coming directly into contact with the consumer. I think the time has come when, seeing the needs and necessities of a City like this, and also the position of the grower, that something should be done in order to let those two people get together, and that that obstacle should be removed. I do not say that a charter should not be equitably dealt with, but I do say that some means or other should be taken to remove any obstacles in the way of bringing the producer and consumer together. In the case of green vegetables, cabbage, and the like the cost of cartage would be very much in excess of what I speak of for potatoes, because they are bulky, but the cartage of potatoes at 1*s.* 3*d.* per ton would soon amount to 10*s.* an acre.

The Law of Distress.

7725. With regard to the law of distress, do you consider there is anything in that direction which might be done?—I do not think that the law of distress operates adversely to the tenant farmer.

The Land Tax.

7726. And the land tax, what do you say about that? —I think that the land tax was originally a tax to be paid by people according to their ability to bear it, but in latter years it has devolved principally upon real property. I think in these times it is a hardship and an injustice to the owners of real property to pay that tax in the way they have now to pay it.

Railway rates.

7727. I think you have something to say about railway rates?—It seems to be a matter generally understood even now that facilities are given for the transit of foreign goods over and above that which is enjoyed by home growers who place their goods on rail at stations intervening between the ports of debarkation and the large centres of industry where those goods are sold. I do not think it necessary for any detailed case to be made out because that seems to be generally acknowledged. I say in the interest of the growers and agriculturists of this country that the lowest rate which can be offered should be offered to the growers in order to enable them to carry on their business both in their own interest and in that of the community at large.

Condition of agriculture before 1879.

7728. Now, apart from those recommendations that you have made, what are the present prospects of farmers like yourself in your district? I presume that before 1879 you were not doing badly?—No, before 1879 we did fairly well; farming did very well. 1875 and 1876 to 1879 was a landmark as to the starting of the adverse times, because that was a bad season; and bad prices and bad seasons following one after the other, brought things to the present condition.

Income Tax.

7729. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Is it not the case that 1874 was the last great farming year?—I cannot say positively.

7730. (*Chairman.*) Since then I understand from what you have said that your rent has been reduced by 50 per cent.?—Yes.

7731. Your assessments to the local taxes have been reduced in a corresponding degree, and I presume that the claims of the income tax have been reduced by the same amount?—Yes.

7732. Do you pay upon your rental or take advantage of the provisions and pay upon your half rental?—I think the half rental is generally paid, not under Schedule D.

7733. Have you taken advantage yourself of the plan under which you may pay upon the actual produce?—I pay on half rental.

7734. You are aware of the provision?—Yes, I am aware of it.

7735. You have not made any demands?—No.

7736. Have your profits been equal to half the rent? —I am afraid they have not.

7737. But you have not availed yourself of it?—No.

Reduced charges on the land.

7738. I understand that the reduction of 50 per cent. was only made recently up to that point?—Yes.

7739. Your rent has been reduced 50 per cent. and your assessment in the same proportion and your income tax has been reduced in the same proportion, and the labour has been reduced by 15 per cent.?—Yes.

Prices of manures, &c.

7740. I presume that you have a considerable reduction in prices upon all the articles you have to buy, manures, and so forth?—As to manures it does not quite follow.

7741. But stock or anything of that sort?—As to manures, nitrate of soda, for instance, from some cause or other whether it is union or something of the kind I do not know, it does not fall with other things. Nitrate of soda I have known to be cheaper than it is now.

7742. Taking all the articles that you have to buy, has there not been a considerable reduction in prices, probably from 20 to 25 per cent.?—There has been a reduction in the price of corn.

7743. Feeding stuffs?—Feeding stuffs.

7744. Even a larger reduction than that? What I am trying to get is whether the adjustment has been made which makes it possible for you to carry on your business as a farmer?—I think farmers will adjust themselves, to some extent, to the circumstances; but what has hurt the farmer is the coming-down process.

Present prices and future prospects.

7745. I am now assuming that the present prices, low as they are, are maintained, and assuming that those prices are maintained, will it be possible for you as a farmer to maintain your business?—Well, I am not sure whether farming will be maintained with present prices. Prices are lower to-day. The last time I was in the market was Wednesday, and they were lower than ever they have been during my lifetime. Speaking of wheat, I never knew it as cheap as it is to-day—never.

7746. Of course, we may hope in the future that there will be average harvests, and not bad ones like those of 1892 and 1893. Assuming average harvests and the adjustments made on rent, taxes, income tax, wages, &c., I want to know whether it is possible for a farmer under those conditions to carry on his business? —It is very difficult to say whether they will do so with existing prices—perhaps they may.

Rent.

7747. If not, it is still possible for a further reduction to be made in respect of rent. Your rent is now 15*s.* per acre?—That is in my case, but in many cases you cannot adjust the rent. The rent has to be a nominal sum. In my case, as I stated before, I have a farm of some portion pasture, a larger portion of arable, but being of variable soil, and being adapted to the keeping of stock, and also growing some descriptions of vegetables, I do something in all those different lines, and I think the rental has not fallen so low as some. I have a case here of a small farm of 80 acres; it is within three miles of my house, the present tenant pays 5*s.* per acre for it, and on the farm there is a tithe which the landlord has to pay out of his 20*l.* a year.

7748. Is your farm a very exceptional one, or may we take it as a fair average? Of course, some are very much worse?—There are some worse.

7749. Is your farm a very exceptionally good one?—It is not an exceptionally good one; some of it is good, but it varies.

7750. May it be considered a fair average?—A fair average.

7751. Is the rent a fair average?—No; my rent, although it be an average farm, is a higher rent than is paid in very many cases. I am inclined to think that across the southern district of Suffolk—and that would include corn growing lands—the rents are not 15*s.* I should think they are more like 10*s.*—in many cases they are. In respect to this farm which I have mentioned, it is a heavy land farm of 80 acres, a small farm —there is nothing particular about it; the condition is not bad.

System of cultivation.

7752. Have you made much change in the cultivation of your farm—have you given up corn?—I have not myself. I grow corn. I also grow a great many vegetables. It is exceptional in that respect; nobody else does so immediately around me. I grow a great many potatoes and other vegetables, and send them to London.

7753. Where farmers have done that, have they been able to make both ends meet?—I think they have to some extent.

Rent.

7754. What I have been rather pointing to is, that there is still a considerable margin on which to draw in your case, to prevent the land going out of cultivation, seeing that you pay 15*s.* per acre?—I think that is exceptional; it being a mixed soil farm to a great

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extent makes all the difference. Again, referring to this farm of which I have been speaking, I may say that there are thousands of acres of similar land in the county, and I do not know of any reason why this rental should be so much below others. I know the tenant of this farm, and I knew the tenants previously, and I know the history of it for years back, and the rental is now 5*s*. per acre, and the owner pays tithes. It was suggested just now that rents might be still further adjusted. I want to point out that I do not know how an owner with a rental of 5*s*. per acre, out of which he has to pay tithe, can further reduce that rent, and also keep his premises in repair. The tenant travelled with me in coming to London to-day, and he said that he had made an application to have some repairs to the premises done.

System of cultivation.

7755. I was looking at it from the point of view of the tenant farmer, and not from that of the landowner. You are now paying 15*s*. per acre for the land; part goes to the landowner and part to the Church for tithe, but still the result is that you are paying 15*s*. It does not matter to you to whom it goes. Is it possible for a farmer, paying that amount, to keep on the business, supposing present prices continue; and if not, whether there is not still further possible an adjustment of the rent?—As I said before, I have adopted a different line of cultivation to that generally adopted in the county, and prices are so variable in the commodities with which I deal, that it is almost impossible to say. I grow a considerable acreage of potatoes; sometimes they sell pretty well, and sometimes very low. Although they average a lower price within the last three or four years, still they have not followed in the wake of other things.

7756. Was it a wheat-growing district?—Yes. The system that has acted formerly was the four-course system, wheat, barley, roots and seeds. The barley might be varied by oats, but that is it roughly.

7757. Have you reduced the proportion of wheat?—I grow very little wheat.

Barley growing.

7758. Of course the reduction in the price of wheat has been relatively much greater in barley and oats?—That is so. Barley this year, I must say, is rather a depressing feature of things, and the present barley season is exceedingly disappointing. Not only is it a disappointing crop, but unless it is of fine quality, I have never known so little demand for it as now.

7759. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Are you speaking of the barley in Suffolk or of barley generally?—I am speaking of the barley produced in Suffolk.

Highway rates.

7760. (*Lord Vernon.*) Did you not say that the English farmer suffered in competition with the American farmer and the foreign producer, because they did not have to pay for maintaining the roads?—Yes.

7761. Who do you suppose keeps the roads in the west of America?—I should think the agricultural community if they have a road must keep it up. We here have to keep a road in an agricultural village on which is conveyed the produce of the United States of America in the shape of flour, and possibly beer manufactured from barley grown in Germany, or something of the kind.

7762. That does not touch the question. Who do you suppose keeps up the roads in foreign countries in agricultural districts?—I suppose they do, but not to the same pitch or in the same condition that we keep them up.

Low prices and the currency.

7763. You think that prices have fallen on account of the short supply of the circulating medium since 1874?—Yes.

7764. How do you account for wheat in 1891 being sold at 45*s*. per quarter?—It does not follow. I said when I was speaking of prices there were three factors. One was the supply, the second was the demand, and the third the amount of the circulating medium. That third factor would be the general ruler of prices, but on account of the variation of the other two, that is supply and demand, we should see rises and falls independently of the general depressing influence which the reduction of the circulating medium would have. When we see a rise of that kind it is owing to the inferiority, or supposed scarcity, of some particular commodity.

7765. Did I understand you to say that farmers and landowners had a right to demand that there should be an increase in the circulating medium, and that the prices should not fall as they have done?—I said this: I thought as regards every owner of property and commodities, whatever it might be, whether land or horses or cattle, or buildings, or anything of the kind, it is unfair to them to depreciate the value of their property by withdrawing any portion of the circulating medium. I take it that a portion of that circulating medium was withdrawn when silver was displaced by certain European States, and I suppose now by America to some extent, and India as well.

The marking of foreign meat.

7766. Do you imagine that the purchasers of agricultural produce have suffered by the fall of prices more than the producers of other articles?—Yes, I should think they have.

7767. I think you said that foreign meat should be sold as such?—Yes.

7768. Do you think that would be an advantage to the English farmer?—I think it would be a very great advantage.

7769. Are you aware that several witnesses gave evidence before the Select Committee on the marking of foreign meat, and they stated that they thought the foreign meat, being sold as such, would tend rather to depreciate the price of English meat—of old cow-meat and bullock-meat?—Being sold as foreign meat would depreciate the value of English meat?

7770. Yes?—I was not aware that witnesses had stated so. I cannot understand the argument.

7771. Are you aware that the Select Committee reported that they did not see any means of doing as you advise?—I was not aware of that until I came into this room. Of course, I am not arguing against any conclusion, but I cannot see the difficulty.

7772. (*Mr. Everett.*) I understand you to say that the low price of produce is the main cause of the present agricultural distress?—That is so.

The currency.

7773. And by a low price for produce, you mean the small amount of money which is received in exchange for produce?—That is so.

7774. And in England the only full standard money is gold, is not that so?—Yes.

7775. So that if gold has gradually risen in value, it would quite account for how it is that we receive less gold in exchange for our produce?—I take it so.

7776. And you are also aware that since 1872 nation after nation has, by legislation, cut off from their subjects the free use of silver and compelled them to use gold instead?—Yes.

7777. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Might I ask the witness to specify the nations?—The States which comprise the Latin Union, I believe, but I do not know.

7778. (*Mr. Everett.*) I can supply that by questions—Germany did that?—Yes.

7779. The United States did that, did it not?—Yes.

7780. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Is that so? What was the money of the United States 25 years ago?—I do not know.

7781. (*Chairman.*) You are under the belief that those changes have been made in the direction you speak of without entering too much into detail in the matter?—That is so.

7782. (*Mr. Everett.*) This policy of forbidding the use of one of the two precious metals, where hitherto the use of both had been freely allowed, is virtually a policy of protection towards that metal which is allowed to continue in free use, is it not?—I should say so.

7783. And by that policy of protection the value of the metal which is allowed to remain as the standard is artificially raised?—Yes.

7784. And the artificial raising of the value of the standard automatically and proportionately lowers the value of all kinds of produce measured by the standard?—I take it so.

7785. And inasmuch as England is a gold standard country, though we have not made any alteration in our laws, the value of gold in England, the value of our money has been proportionately affected?—Yes, I think so.

7786. The farmers have to buy their money with produce?—Yes.

7787. And as a matter of fact, by the recent action of many nations, the value of what they buy has been artificially raised by what is virtually a system of protection?—That is so.

7788. When we ask that what we grow should be protected we are met with the outcry that it is perfectly monstrous to ask such a thing?—Yes.

7789. But we really are the victims of protection?—I take it in this way: that I have to sell a much larger proportion of the commodities which I produce, in order, as Mr. Everett would put it, to purchase a sufficient amount of gold to discharge any liability which I have. I am, myself, the owner of a small propery, and being a poor man I have to mortgage it. I have to pay that mortgage in gold, and I have to realise a larger amount of my produce in order to make that payment in gold, and I think that it is hard upon me that that produce should be depreciated as measured by gold by the arbitrary displacement of silver which has taken place by a great many European States, and which is still further taking place by suggested action of the Indian Government or Her Majesty's Government, I do not know which. I have not these matters at my fingers' ends. But I have got the idea that gold is appreciated by this system. As to the particular States which comprise the Latin Union I think Italy was one and France was another, but I have not looked them up.

7790. You are aware that a great change is being made at the present moment in India?—That is so.

7791. Whereby a new demand for gold there has been created?—Yes.

7792. And from the general opinions that you have given to the Commission, may we not assume that it is probable that those fresh demands for gold will still further accelerate the upward movement of gold?—That is so; that prices are depreciated by the displacement of silver and the demand for gold. If silver is further displaced by States who did use it, using gold instead, if that argument is correct, prices must go in the same direction.

7793. The proposition is that great as the fall has been it has not reached bottom, it is still going on?—We have no evidence that it has reached bottom.

7794. We know that new demands are actually current to-day, created by fresh legislation, which are tending to still further appreciate gold and depreciate the value of agricultural produce?—I take it so.

Railway rates.

7795. (*Mr. Channing.*) With regard to the railway rates question, have you any information to give us about preferential rates?—No, I have not.

7796. Have you any opinion as to the amendment of the law which is necessary in order to give satisfaction to agriculturists with regard to railway rates?—My opinion is that with regard to our agricultural produce satisfaction would be given to the agricultural community if it were carried at a reasonable rate, and at the same rate as foreign produce is carried. I believe that the agricultural community would be satisfied if reasonable rates were granted for the carriage of their produce, and that no preferential rates were given to the produce of foreign countries. I might say with regard to that that I myself on one little article which is not generally an agricultural product, that of osiers, went to a buyer in this market, and he tells me that the rates are so difficult and expensive and heavy on this article from Suffolk and Cambridge that they can get them cheaper and better elsewhere.

7797. With reference to the large farmer or the small farmer who always has to make use of the railway, is there anything to be said?—I think that probably the large farmer has an advantage over the small farmer, because in selling more largely he can put more on at a time and avail himself of a truck load say of five or six tons at a special rate.

7798. Is there an unfair preference given to the large farmers under that system of paying for truck loads?—The railway company have to consider what their position as a company is to their shareholders; it is more expensive to run a truck load from any given place with a ton weight than with six or seven tons weight. And more than that I take it that to compel a railway company to carry, or to suggest that a smaller quantity should be carried, at the same rate per ton as large quantities, would be unreasonable. It would not be in the interest of the community at large, because it would probably result in a heavier charge being made for large quantities, and it would be injurious to the large producer certainly, and certainly to the consumer. It would be advocating a means of making transit expensive, and in these days with home and foreign competition we certainly ought not to adopt any policy which would make the transit rates whether for large or small quantities greater than they are now.

7799. Is there any difference between milk rates this year and the basis of 1892, or have they reverted to the rates of 1892 in your district?—I do not know the milk rates at present.

An agricultural parcels post.

7800. Have you any opinion about an agricultural parcels post for making use of the Post Office, whether that would help small growers?—I should think it might in some instances. Your question seems to tend in the direction of distribution. It might perhaps in some instances, but I do not think there is so much to be done by distribution as is sometimes imagined. The greengrocer now who is the distributor seems to be an expensive man to go to, but he goes into the market and buys what he wants, and the middleman who sells him goods which he got in large quantities by rail sells them at a much cheaper rate than he could sell them if he had got them in small quantities, and he can sell quite as cheaply there as the producer could sell direct to the greengrocer in London, and for the matter of that, the consumer. The consumer in London can go into the market and buy his goods quite as cheaply as he could buy them from the producer in the country direct. There would be this difference, this question has been raised and possibly I might say a word upon it: I know a gentleman in my neighbourhood who took a great deal of interest in trying to establish some means for the distribution of agricultural produce some time ago. That resulted in an interview with the Directors of the Great Eastern Railway Company. They offered a rate of 15*s.* a ton from Suffolk, and they offered to carry garden produce and agricultural produce to London for 15*s.* per ton in small quantities. Well, I do not think that the consumer in London would really be benefitted by getting it direct from the producer if he were only a small purchaser, for this reason, that the railway rate on those goods would be 6*s.* or 7*s.* per ton on large quantities; the cartage into the market would be 1*s.* 3*d.*, say 7*s.* 6*d.* altogether, and then the difference between 6*s.* per ton and the price for smaller quantities would cover the salesman's commission. Anyone could go into the market and get it from the salesman by paying his commission, and by reason of his getting it in large quantities at a lower rate he can supply the consumers in London as cheaply as the consumer could be supplied by the producer direct.

Reduction of rent.

7801. (*Mr. Lambert.*) May I ask what class of land the reductions have been greatest upon in your county?—On heavy land.

7802. Mostly growing corn?—Mostly corn lands.

7803. Would the instance of 50 or 60 per cent. reduction be typical of the whole county?—I put it I think from 30 to 80 per cent. because it varies very much according to what the land is in the locality.

7804. Have you any tables of what the rent was prior to say 1870?—No, I have not.

7805. Would you be able to give that information on your own estate?—No, I could not, I could not give the information as to what the rent was. I am only a tenant farmer; I have not any knowledge of it.

7806. Have you been on your estate long enough to be able to give that information?—As to what the rents are?

7807. As to what the rents were?—I have stated what my own was.

7808. Would you state what your rent was in 1870?—1,300*l.*

7809. Was there any advance say from 1860 to 1879?—1860, yes. I am going a long way back. I am going back into times previous to my occupation. I think shortly before 1860 the rent was 1,150*l.* and in about 1865 the rental was raised to 1,300*l.*, that was the maximum that it ever reached.

7810. So the rental was raised, I presume, owing to better prices for agricultural produce?—I take it that that was so. I was only a lad at that time.

7811. When did the rent begin to drop?—I should think about 1883 and 1884, or something like that.

7812. You say old tenants have given up their farms being unable to obtain a sufficient reduction of rent; are those cases general?—There are several of them, a great many of them; a good many tenants have given up land in this way; an application has been made by the tenant to his landlord for a reduction in rent on account of prices falling, and consequently his rent was too heavy. Well, the landlords have in various cases—I could quote some—thought that the land was worth more, and that the tenants could tide over, or they found themselves unwilling or unable to make this reduction, and they have let a tenant go, and sometimes they have had to take a very much less rent from someone else, and in several cases they have had to hold them themselves, and then let them at a very considerable reduction.

7813. You say a great many farmers have been ruined?—Yes.

7814. Would that be before they have received a reduction of rent?—Some of them no doubt.

7815. Had they received a reduction of rent sooner they would have been able to tide over their difficulty perhaps?—Some of them; it would be difficult to say what was the cause in every case.

7816. Are you in favour of the principle of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

7817. Are you in favour of the principle of arbitration between landlord and tenant as regards quitting under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I do not know what the section means as regards quitting.

7818. I mean that a landlord would appoint his valuer and the tenant would appoint his valuer; would you be prepared to carry that principle further as to fixing the rent?—No.

Fixing rent by arbitration.

7819. What objection should you have to carry out the principle of arbitration with regard to the fixing of the rent?—I think that the time has not yet arrived when it will be possible to compel a landlord to accept a certain rent. I think that the landlord up to the present at any rate is somewhat the owner of his property as well as the rent charger, and I do not think it is necessary that a tenant, because he is in occupation, should claim to hold under a certain rent. That would make a fixity of tenure if he had a right to appoint an umpire or valuer, and the landlord to do the same. I understand that to be the purport of your question.

7820. That is the purport of my question; some farmers have been ruined?—Yes.

Land courts.

7821. Do you think it would be advisable to prevent them being ruined, supposing that a reduction of rent would prevent it, by having such a court established for the purpose of fixing a fair rent?—It would have been better for those cases, I think, but the time has gone over. I fancy that the old leases have gone out and, therefore, the position of the tenant is such that the occasion for it does not now arise.

7822. (*Chairman.*) Were the cases in which you speak of the farmers being ruined, cases where they hold under a lease?—Yes.

7823. And not from year to year?—If they were held from year to year, at most they could give a year and 11 months' notice.

7824. Has this matter of a judicial rent been discussed by your association?—No, I do not think we have discussed judicial rents.

Shooting rights.

7825. (*Mr. Lambert.*) You said you had not the shooting on your estate?—I have not the shooting on the farm I occupy, and on which I live. I am a small owner as well.

7826. Have you the right of killing the ground game?—I have the right of killing the ground game as I please—or I can appoint some one else in writing to do so.

7827. Have you any further extension of those liberties?—No.

7828. Do you think it would be wise to give a further extension?—I do not think there is much complaint as regards ground game now, and I do not think there is a necessity for it. I dare say there are a few cases where a tenant would like to have those rights, but I question whether it is desirable. It would still further curtail the landlord's rights and his pleasure in his estates. It seems to me that further legislation would drive him to take less interest in his estates than he has now.

7829. Speaking from the tenant farmer's point of view would it be wise to give him the ground game on his estate?—He has that now.

7830. I mean to do with it as he pleases?—The right which he now holds is sufficient to enable him to keep the ground game down. I do not hear many complaints. I do not say that there are not isolated complaints, but I think they are not at all general in my county.

Tenure and changes in system of cultivation.

7831. You spoke of the farmers adapting themselves to different produce; do you think the system of tenure of land in any way prohibits them from adapting themselves to different systems of cultivation?—It may in some cases, but not to any great extent. Farmers are not fast to adapt themselves to a new system; they do not move in that direction very fast, and I have not heard complaints that they are not able to move in that direction. I have myself done so, and I now grow some vegetables.

Notice to quit and compensation.

7832. Would you think it desirable in such a case as yours that, presuming your landlord were to give you notice to quit, say a year's notice to quit, you should be entitled to compensation for such notice?—If he gave me notice to quit, that I should be entitled to compensation? I do not think I should be entitled to get compensation for that notice. I have not myself applied to my landlord for a lease, for the reasons which I have stated before. But I should not feel inclined for a long undertaking under existing circumstances. I do not see any reason, if my landlord gave me a notice to leave, why I should ask compensation beyond the compensation which would be due to me on any improvements in the soil. I think a tenant should have that. He should have compensation for improvements which he may have brought about, for draining and for the manures that he used on his land, and cake and corn fed on the soil and the like; he should have all those, and have the full value of what he leaves on the land.

The marking of foreign meat.

7833. On the question of foreign meat, how would you propose to mark it?—I take it that the mark would have to be made in such a way that in the event of any one trying to sell foreign meat as English it could be discovered, whether it is so or not.

7834. How can you discover whether meat is foreign or British?—I would compel the importer of foreign meat to put a brand on that meat in some way to be known perfectly. I have learned quite recently in this room that there was a difficulty which could not, I suppose, be overcome, and it has not been recommended by the Committee that sat on this question, that foreign meat should be marked. I take it that the difficulty was a great difficulty, or it would have been overcome, but I am at a loss to know why it could not be done. I would make a vendor of foreign meat stick a placard on it showing that it was foreign meat. Well, the next point would be how to identify it. I take it that where there is a joint there must be a bone, and there should be a brand put upon that bone.

7835. Would you brand every bone in the beast's body?—You would catch most; a leg of mutton would have a shank and so would a shoulder. As to whether it would be possible to brand every joint, or almost every joint, I think you might. I do not see any difficulty. You could have a little brand and pop it on to the bones. In the case of meat being offered for sale which has not this placard on, it could be examined, and then it could be seen whether this brand had been put there or whether the joint had been somewhere tampered with, so as to cut out the brand if it had been there. I think it might be done.

Farm loss.

7836. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You gave us some figures as to the profit and loss account of a farm for five years?—Yes.

7837. The loss for the five years amounted to 1,523*l.*?—Yes.

7838. Was the greater part of that loss made in the last two years?—I have not got that so much in detail, but I have the balance sheet here.

7839. It would be more in the last two years, would it not?—There has been a depreciation in the value of stock. I have not the yearly details, but I have the balance sheet here for five years put together.

7840. In that you allow the rent?—Yes.

7841. Do you also take into account anything on account of the rent of the residence of the farmer?—Well, the rent included his residence.

7842. But in the loss account you charge him with the whole of his rent as a loss?—Yes.

7843. But the farmer has a residence?—Yes.

7844. No allowance is made for that?—No, I do not think there is. This is information given to me. I cannot say whether that is so or not; it would not be usual if it were done.

7845. Nor would the produce on the farm consumed by the farmer be in that account?—Yes, I should think so. I think the produce the tenant consumed on the farm would be taken in. This was done by a business man, and very accurately done.

Rent.

7846. On your own farm the present rental is how much an acre?—About 15*s.*

7847. And the tithe 5*s.* or 6*s.*?—Yes, the 15*s.* rental includes the tithe.

7848. And the rates come to about 1*s.* 6*d.* an acre, you say; 2*s.* 9*d.* in the £ comes out on the 1,380 acres, with the rental of 850*l.*, at about 1*s.* 6*d.* an acre?—Perhaps it would.

7849. What is the land tax an acre?—On that particular farm the land tax was redeemed.

Tithe.

7850. Then the tithe would be a far more serious burthen than the rates?—The tithe is a larger charge.

7851. The tithe is a very large charge on most of those farms that you have mentioned?—It is on a good many of them.

7852. (*Chairman.*) That point does not seem to affect the tenant. The tenant pays the rent to the landlord, and the landlord pays the tithe?—That is so.

Rates.

7853. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Do you consider the rates fall upon the tenant or the owner?—They fall upon the tenant in the first instance, and in the case of new rates—I do not know that we have many just now—in the case of increased rates it is the custom for the tenant during the hiring to pay the rates. In the case of increased rates it falls directly upon the tenant until the expiration of that hire, at any rate.

7854. But as the rates in the £ have not increased in your district, they were probably taken into account in fixing the rent, and they are on that farm practically charged upon the owner and not upon the tenant?—If you put it in that way the rates are taken into consideration in hiring; an intending tenant would naturally consider the rates in hiring.

7855. As they have practically stood still on your farm they have practically been borne by the owner and not by the occupier?—Well, the occupier has paid them.

7856. But he has paid a decreased rent?—Your argument would be that I would pay a less rent on account of those rates.

7857. Yes?—That probably would be so.

Tithe.

7858. Do you consider that the high tithe in your district has prevented landowners from expending money on improvements?—I should think probaby that the tithe does prevent landlords from spending money on their estates that they would otherwise spend. If the income is by so much reduced, he could not spend what he has not.

7859. That is what I mean; where the tithe is high, there is less inducement to spend money?—Of course there must be, and that would apply to the landlord who was not a wealthy man. If a man has not an income outside of his land he cannot spend it. Some of them are wealthy, and independent of the land, and some are not.

7860. But when the tithe approaches to the rent there is less security for any money that he lays out for improvements?—No doubt the security is weakened.

Local government.

7861. Do you not think that Imperial management of the Local Government would add very enormously to the charge?—In rating you mean?

7862. Yes. I think you said that you considered it would add directly to the local expenditure?—I did not say that. I take it that supposing the rates were paid from an Imperial source, those who administer them would not be so careful; or at any rate the idea would be, that they would not be so careful.

7863. Then they would have to be paid for administering?—I do not know that they would; we have an unpaid local authority in the shape of the County Council, and there might be extravagance, perhaps there might be some increase from that; but matters might be so adjusted so that it was partially local and partially Imperial, and then the occupier locally would be interested. It might not be entirely Imperial.

7864. You do not consider that the rates have caused the depression in any way, you think they have stood still?—Yes, they have not increased lately.

Suffolk custom.

7865. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I wanted to ask you two or three questions about the Suffolk custom; would you mind stating to the Commission what it includes?—I do not know that I could state the whole of it; but I think I can state shortly the principle of the Suffolk custom what it means and what is involved under it. When a tenant farmer goes out of his occupation under the Suffolk custom which constitutes generally a system of farming known as the four-course shift, which I need not explain to the Commission, the outgoing tenant is paid. I will take shifts with corn; two of those shifts will be sown with corn the last year, that will be one half of the arable portion of the occupation. On the expiration of the tenancy which takes place on the 11th of October, the tenant by quitting will leave his corn standing there, and that which is left the incoming tenant will thresh, carry to market, and dress; for that he receives the straw, chaff, and colder of the corn that is left on the occupation; that is with reference to the corn shift. As to the fallow shift, if it is heavy farm land there is a portion left on long fallow, that is uncropped land, that is ploughed and goes through the various operations of husbandry, but that is rather an exceptional case than the rule. The larger portion of the fallow shift would be cropped with roots, and under the Suffolk custom the incoming tenant does not pay for the roots, but for the tillages which there have been on those lands; he pays for the manures which have been applied to the roots, and in some cases he pays the rent and rates, and taxes for those fallows, but not in all; it varies. In some cases there is a stipulation, and in some cases not, that is as to the fallow shift. As to the seed shift, the outgoing tenant is paid for his hay and clover, and so forth; he is paid for sheep folding and he is paid for the manure in the yards, and in the valuing for that manure, he is either paid (I am not quite confident on this point) an increased price for the manure, if cake and corn are used in making it, or he would be paid a proportion of the bill for the cake consumed during the last three or four years. I am not quite clear whether it is an increased payment on the manure, or getting his cake bill paid back. That is the substance of the Suffolk covenant as distinguished from the Norfolk covenant. Under the Norfolk covenant, the outgoing tenant is paid for his crop of roots that he leaves on the land. If he has no crop, he is not paid for it. Under the Suffolk covenant the outgoing tenant is paid for all the tillages and expenditure on the fallow, whether there is a crop of roots, or there is not. That is the difference between the two systems.

7866. At what time of the year do tenants generally leave?—The 11th of October, the old Michaelmas entry.

7867. Would you say what the compensation under the Suffolk custom comes to per acre on an average?—I do not think I could. I should think perhaps 35*s.* per acre in many cases, over the whole farm 30*s.* per acre.

7868. (*Mr. Little.*) That is two years' rent?—Yes; the only basis for that statement was that I was thinking of what I paid myself on the entry on lands, which I bought and now occupy, and that would be a pretty good class of land, and my valuation amounted to 600*l.* on 400 acres.

7869. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) That is when you entered, when rents were higher?—Yes.

7870. Would it be a year's rent or two years' rent now?—I do not know a case in point just now.

7871. I think you told us also that under the Suffolk custom they could claim for drainage?—I think they can.

7872. Drainage done with or without the consent of the landlord?—I think without the consent of the landlord.

7873. Is there any other semi-permanent improvement for which they could claim under the custom?—I do not know of one.

7874. Is the Suffolk custom generally regarded as satisfactory?—I think so. I do not hear of complaints under it.

Mr. O. D. Johnson.

16 Feb. 1894.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

7875. And it is therefore partly for the reason that they hold their farms under that custom rather than under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I think the reason why the Agricultural Holdings Act is not generally adopted is that claims would be made and difficulties arise. The procedure has not, as a rule, been satisfactory in the settlement of it.

7876. Have you any proposals yourself with regard to the amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I have not myself. I have not formulated any.

7877. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Can a landlord counterclaim under the Suffolk custom?—Yes, I think he can claim for damages if there are any. He is not so keen to claim for damages under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

7878. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) As a matter of fact, when a farm is given up by the Suffolk custom, would the valuers allow a counter-claim for damages, or do they as a matter of fact?—Yes, they do.

7879. But not so much as in the case of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I think not.

7880. Your general impression I gather of the Agricultural Holdings Act is, that one of the great reasons which prevents claims being made more commonly under it is the fear of a counter-claim?—That is so.

7881. You have no suggestion to make?—I have not formulated any suggestion.

Cattle diseases.

7882. Have you suffered at all at different times from contagious diseases among cattle or sheep in Suffolk?—Yes.

7883. Foot-and-mouth disease and pleuro-pneumonia?—Yes.

7884. Are you free now?—Yes.

7885. Would a recurrence of those diseases be very disastrous?—It is very desirable that there should not be a recurrence; they are disastrous; they entail a very great deal of loss, and that is another name for disaster.

Slaughter of animals at port of debarkation.

7886. Do you agree with the evidence of many witnesses who have come before this Commission that foreign animals ought to be slaughtered at the port of debarkation?—I must say, what I think about that, and what I think is in the interest of the county that I come from and the adjoining counties. It is to our interest, and that of the eastern counties generally, to buy our store cattle as cheaply as we can. We do not want to buy disease, we do not want to import disease, and I would not myself advocate for a moment the removal of any restrictions which now exist for the prevention of the importation of disease; but, on the other hand, if it could be shown absolutely that cattle could be imported from a foreign country, or from abroad with a certainty of their coming free from disease, I should not myself advocate the prevention of that importation. I know, and I feel confident, I speak not only my own views, but also the opinions of the agricultural community, not only of Suffolk, but Norfolk as well; I say that it is to our interest to purchase our store cattle as cheaply as we can, let them come from where they would, and I advocate this in the interest of the community and the country generally. I would not advocate it if there was any danger of the importation of disease.

7887. But unless that freedom from danger could be assured, you would not import foreign animals?—I could not ask for it unless they were free from disease, because I know the danger of letting in diseased cattle and the losses arising therefrom.

Present prices and future prospects.

7888. I think you were asked by the Chairman if the present prices of agricultural produce, low as they are, ceased to fall any further, whether farming could be conducted under those circumstances, and you said you were doubtful about that, I think?—Yes; my opinion is that farming would be conducted, and that the farmer would struggle on—whether with anything approaching to prosperity is another matter, but things will to some extent adjust themselves to circumstances. Perhaps the lands may be relieved by laying them down to grass, and in that way they may struggle on, but I cannot speak positively upon that point for this reason: that we do not know that we have touched the lowest point in prices; we have touched a low point, or rather there has been a depression of trade in grain, the only one which is a profitable one of late—at least the nearest approach to it—is barley; it has been touched by the importation of foreign grain more than it has been before. Whether the barley grown will be permanently reduced in price I do not know. You cannot sell it now, unless it is something exceptional.

7889. I rather gathered that it is your opinion, from your answers to some of the questions, that in many things there is not much room for further adjustment?—There cannot be in a good many cases a further adjustment of rents. I quoted one case here; it is not that I have hunted it up; there are many others I daresay, but it happened to be a small occupation, and I know that the case of small occupations has been a little brought to the front. It is a case within three miles of my door; the farm is in very good condition, and 5*s.* per acre rent is paid, and the landlord pays the tithe, and that is not a solitary case. I could find plenty of such cases if I wanted.

Farm losses.

7890. In one instance you gave us (I am speaking of the farm of 350 acres), the result after five years of occupation was a loss of 1,500*l.*?—Yes.

7891. You said that the rent of that farm was 10*s.* per acre?—Yes.

7892. The rent for those five years was 875*l.*; if it had been held rent free there would still have been a very great loss?—There would have been still a great loss.

Shooting rents.

7893. Talking of any further reduction of rents, is not Suffolk a great shooting county?—Yes.

7894. And shootings in the county are very much in demand?—Yes.

7895. What sort of a rent per acre do you get for the shooting as a rule?—They are in many cases let with the residence of the owner who has vacated, and the residence and the shooting so often go together that it is, perhaps, a little difficult to state what the shootings would be without the mansion. The letting value of the shooting separated from the mansion would be 1*s.* per acre on the arable lands, amounting to some 3*s.* or 4*s.* on woods.

7896. But it is a fact, is it not, that a great many of the mansions are vacant or not resided in by the landlords?—They are not resided in by the landlords.

7897. And many of them are let?—Yes.

7898. In the case of a mansion and the shooting being let together, it often commands a very considerable rent?—Yes.

7899. Are there not cases in Suffolk where the shooting on 5,000 or 6,000 acres lets for 3,000*l.* or 4,000*l.* a year?—I hardly think that. There is one case, I believe, and that is very exceptional, where a shooting lets for a very big sum, but in that case there goes with the shooting the attendants, and everything that a gentleman requires in his residence. It is rather difficult to assess that.

7900. What I want to arrive at is, if any further adjustment of the rent were required in certain parts of that county, is it not possible to treat them as shooting property rather than as farming tenancies?—I believe as shooting tenancies that some cultivation is necessary. It has been found in Suffolk that where the cultivation is abandoned the shooting also becomes of very little value, that is, so far as partridges are concerned. Partridges follow the plough, and if you abandon the plough or tillage you will not get partridges.

7901. Would not you have other game?—Yes, pheasants and hares and other game.

7902. I understand that large tracts are already abandoned to rabbits?—Yes, I am somewhat in the western portion of Suffolk and to the north of me there is a large acreage of land; it is light land that used to be tenanted, but there are few tenants now. A good deal is cultivated by the landlords and a good deal not cultivated. It is what people lay down to grass but it practically keeps nothing but rabbits and game now.

7903. Do the rabbits produce an income?—Whether they do in the hands of the occupiers I do not know. A rabbit warren does produce a rental.

Changes in system of cultivation.

7904. Is there any change of system in farming operations in Suffolk that you would recommend or advise that you think would at all restore the position of prosperity?—Well, I would suggest that a tenant should cultivate and sell as he pleases provided that he leaves the land in good condition or maintains it in good condition. There might occur such a thing as a tenant to have to go against his will, but if he maintains it in good condition and leaves it so under the four-course shift I do not think there would be an objection to that. I do not believe at the present time that many landlords do restrict the tenant. I think he is allowed a very fair license in what he does provided he keeps within those lines.

7905. But even with absolute freedom at present prices do you see any possibility of the restoration of agricultural property?—I am afraid I cannot say that I see a probability of the restoration of it.

Present prices and future prospects.

7906. So far, we have been discussing the question on the assumption that the prices fell no further. But is not the great difficulty in the agricultural situation at the present moment this, not only a great fall in prices but the fact that the fall up to now appears to have been continuous, and there is no end to it?—That is so up to the present moment.

7907. If that state of things continues what is your view of the position?—If that state of things continues people will not grow wheat. And barley seems to follow in the same way. It seems to me to come to this, that the land in that case would only to a certain extent be cultivated and sown with corn, and a very large portion of it would be left in the position of a layer or pasture. A portion of it would be left in that way, and sheep would be put upon it, and some portion of it would be kept in tillage, but what with the low rent and the small labour bill, from the abandonment practically of a large portion of it going out of cultivation, and the sheep, and in some cases rabbits—between the lot there would be something in the shape of a living upon it, but anything approaching prosperity would not prevail and never could; and as to the agricultural labourer he would be still less in demand as land was less cultivated.

Reduction of labour.

7908. Even supposing that it was possible for the tenant to carry on under this system that you suggest as possible, do you mean that a great loss of employment to the agricultural labourer and further injuring of his position would result?—Yes.

The currency.

7909. I understand that you attribute this great fall in prices to the appreciation in gold following on the increased demand for that metal, which has occurred since the great monetary change to which you have referred?—That is my idea.

7910. And the chief cause of the present agricultural depression, I understand you to say, is this great fall in prices?—That is the main if not the chief cause.

Reduction of labour.

7911. What do you think will be the position of the agricultural labourer?—So far as the agricultural labourer is concerned, he must drift into the worst position eventually, because I can only think that with these low prices and less cultivation less employment must follow.

The currency.

7912. I observe in the *précis* of your evidence, with which you have been good enough to favour the Commission, that, as a remedy, you advocate that silver should be restored to the position it was in 20 or 25 years ago?—That is so. I need hardly say I am not an expert upon this subject, but I can imagine from what I have seen, heard, and read, that whenever there has been a withdrawal of the circulating medium—I always use the words "circulating medium" advisedly—lower prices have followed, if there is any increased supply it means higher prices, and if there is a decrease of supply it means lower prices. I do not advocate the continual or undue tampering with the circulating medium, but if it is a fact that from the circulating medium, a portion of which is silver and a portion gold, silver has been withdrawn and gold has not been forthcoming to make up the deficiency, and as the population and the commodities of the world increase the demand for silver and gold increases also; a larger amount of gold would be necessary in order to measure those products than previously. Supposing an increase in the output of gold, that increase would be required for the normal wants of the world as measured with the population and commodities with which it has to be measured, that is my idea of the matter.

7913. I understand your idea to be this, that by restoring silver to the position that it occupied formerly, and relieving the pressure upon gold, it might be a great advantage?—Yes.

7914. You were asked by Lord Vernon that if these were your views how you could account for the fact that wheat rose in 1891 to 40*s.* per quarter. I have referred to the statistics, and I find that the average price was 37*s.* per quarter in that year. I wanted to ask you whether you are aware of the fact that with some variations the fall in the price of wheat has been pretty continuous since 1873?—Yes, I am aware of that.

7915. Are you acquainted with the argument which is often used that the effect of the fall of silver is to give a bonus to the wheat which is exported from silver-using countries to gold-using countries?—Yes, I am aware of that argument.

7916. Are you aware that in that particular year 1891 there was a very considerable rise, a temporary rise, which lasted for some months, in the price of silver?—As far as I recollect, I cannot say positively that there was a rise. I cannot positively speak upon that point.

7917. It was a fact, and that might account for the rise in wheat?—It might have some effect upon it. I would like to say once more with regard to those prices—I have said it before, I believe—that one wants almost to make it a matter of great research to be able to answer every question definitely as to the prices. The price of wheat, for instance, might rise at a certain period of a year, through the prospect of a bad crop in the United States. I said there was a rise and fall in prices independently of the circulating medium, but that is an inner circle, as it were; but the money question is the outside factor which guides prices.

Rent

7918. (*Mr. Little.*) The effect of your evidence as regards Suffolk, is that with regard to a great deal of land rent was practically extinguished?—That is so.

7919. And I imagine that in many cases, even now, rents have scarcely been adjusted to the prices of to-day?—They certainly have not, because the prices of to-day are lower than ever they were since I have seen a day.

7920. If a still further fall in prices were to take place, the area of land which would bear no rent must be greatly extended?—I am afraid that is so.

7921. The consequence of any further fall would be a greater extension of the area yielding no rent?—Yes.

Tithe.

7922. Is not in many cases the tithe fully equal to the entire value of the land?—It is in some cases.

7923. Do you know whether the Act of 1891 has in such cases been brought into operation?—I do not know.

7924. You have not considered whether the question of tithe when it equals the whole value of the land shall be re-opened?—The question of tithes is an exceedingly difficult one, whether it should be revalued or not I hardly know what to say. An arrangement was entered into in 1836, I believe, and it was arranged accordingly, but the conditions under which agriculture was carried on then are very different to what they are to-day. Nevertheless it was an arrangement made. Whether anything could be devised, whether the payer could be relieved and the owner not mulcted I do not know.

Rates.

7925. With regard to rates I understand that your rates have not increased. Are they not more in ratio to the value of the produce than they were?—Yes, I think they are.

7926. Therefore they are a greater burden?—They would be in that case.

7927. And whether paid by the landlord or the tenant they have still to come out of the produce?—Yes.

7928. And they extract a larger quantity of the produce than they did?—Yes.

Land Tax.

7929. The land tax is a tax from which the county of Suffolk suffers peculiarly, it presses there with exceptional severity, does it not?—I do not quite know how it is generally.

7930. What does it amount to on the farms that you are acquainted with?—I believe the land tax in the village in which I live is 11*d.* in the pound.

7931. In some Suffolk parishes it is considerably more, is it not?—I do not know what it is generally.

Spitalfields Market.

7932. With regard to the Spitalfields Market that you spoke of, that was a case where the monopoly of the market was in private hands?—Yes.

7933. That was a case that was inquired into by the Markets Commission, and they made certain recommendations as to dealing with monopolies in private hands?—I do not know that they did so myself.

7934. Would you be in favour of such monopolies being acquired by local authorities on equitable terms?—It would be probably better. I do not know what the local authorities would do when they acquired them. If they carried them on on the same footing there would be no advantage. I am assuming that they would not, if they did there would be no advantage.

7935. You think that would be a better guarantee for the public interest if markets were in the hands of the local authorities than in that of a private individual?—I should imagine it would.

The marking of foreign meat.

7936. With regard to selling foreign produce for what it is, without pledging yourself to particular detail, would you be in favour of everything of the kind being sold for what it really is?—Certainly; I think, in justice to the English producer, and in justice to the public as well with regard to foreign produce, every step that it is possible to take should be taken to ensure that foreign produce is not sold as English. It is defrauding the community, and injuring the agricultural producer. I know that in my county, until recently, we have not been very active in adopting the Merchandise Marks Act. Within four miles of my own house, a few days ago, we had an instance of a little grocer selling margarine for butter. Our inspector goes to a cottage and buys something supposed to be butter, and after a little conversation the woman who served him said: "If I had known you had been coming I would not have sold it to you;" and a conviction followed. That is a case in point. That is a case of margarine. I have heard from Lord Vernon, to-day, the condition of things with reference to the Committee which sat on this question of foreign meat, that they found it difficult to adopt any system by which the foreign meat could be marked. I only regret to hear that such is the fact. Whether any more light can be thrown upon it, or whether any individual can be sufficiently ingenious to adopt a means by which foreign meat could be detected, I do not know, but he would be conferring a boon upon the agricultural community if he did so. I think if a gentleman sells New Zealand mutton (I do not wish to interfere with him), he must not sell it as English mutton.

Beer.

7937. And that you would extend to other produce?—Yes, to anything.

7938. Would you say that perhaps beer should be sold for what it is?—I do not mind buying beer made of anything that makes it palatable, but if it makes it injurious I do object. If we look into the dictionary we find that beer is a liquor brewed from malt and hops, and I think that that definition should still continue, and that that definition should be acknowledged as fair, and that anything brewed from anything else but malt and hops should be declared as such. You would be conferring on the agricultural community, particularly on the lower classes of the agricultural community, a great boon, and they would be very glad and hail with satisfaction any legislation to show that what is called beer is brewed from malt and hops. If they knew it was brewed from malt and hops they would be very glad to buy it and drink it.

Small holdings.

7939. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Nothing has been done under the Small Holdings Act, I understand. Have you had any application to the County Council to put it into operation?—No, we have not. If I may be allowed to read a letter which bears almost directly on that matter I will do so. I asked a friend of mine who happens to live in a parish where I know something about the condition of allotments, and I wrote to him on this question, and he replied to me as follows on the 18th of December:—"In answer to yours, we have 43 acres of "land allotted under the Enclosure Act for allotments. "The rents now average 23*s.* per acre, free of all rates, "tithe, &c., in quarter and half acre plots, about one mile "from the furthest cottages. Michaelmas, 1893, we had "23 unlet, but have now let 7 acres to Sturgeon Brothers, "at 10*s.* per acre. They are large machinists and "hire 10 acres in a batch. We have two small holdings of 40 acres each unlet which the landlord is "farming; one farm of 67 acres 1 rood 34 poles unlet, "and has been laying dormant for the last 5 years. "Another gentleman has about 500 acres unlet that he "is farming himself for the want of tenants. There "are not more than two or three labourers out of work; "the wages are 10*s.* per week; 5 years ago we were "paying 11*s.* You can make any use you please of "this."

Large and small farms compared.

7940. From what you have heard in your county latterly have large or small farms been most in demand on the whole, which of these farms have been better able to meet the rent?—I think that perhaps of all those classes as a rule the small holders have been worse placed. At any rate, there were more small holders in Suffolk 25 years ago than there are to-day. I do not think that those small holdings have ceased to be such through any arbitrary action of the landlord. I believe they have lapsed as it were, they have been given up, and there have been none to take them—they seem to have lapsed.

Free sale.

7941. With regard to those farms where you have got freedom of sale, what is the custom as to the equivalent brought on to your farm for the produce sold off?—I do not think there has been a stipulation on behalf of the landlord that anything should be returned as a rule. The position is this: this last few years things have been so bad and rents falling, that landlords have been rather glad to keep their tenants, provided that they paid the rent and kept in occupation. I do not say that the landlords are arbitrary; but there are cases where rent is a necessity, and where the landlords have been glad to retain their tenants and allow them a license, in fact without being particular as to what they did.

7942. Practically, would you consider that freedom of sale would be of practical use to the tenant and that it would be only fair that there should be a proper equivalent payable to the landlord on what he did sell?—A proper equivalent? Do you take it as a sum of money to the landlord or something returned to the land?

7943. Something returned to the land?—I confess myself that if he kept the land in fair condition and left the tenancy in the four-course shift there would be no grievance. As to the question of an equivalent there is so much difference of opinion upon that subject that it is rather difficult to say. Some people think if you use artificial manure it is injurious, but the teachings of the scientists is to the contrary, so that it is debatable ground rather.

Prices of manures, &c.

7944. (*Mr. Clay.*) The Chairman asked you a question as to the fall in the price of manures, suggesting that that was a compensation for the depressed price of our produce. Is it your opinion that you have got your cakes and manures much cheaper?—Some of them are cheaper; they are not all. At the present time linseed cake is dear as compared with corn.

7945. Have not oil-cakes and cotton cakes been a deal dearer in the last three or four years?—I am using very little because corn is cheaper, and I think that cake is very dear as compared with the price of corn.

7946. Therefore we do not derive much benefit from that?—Not altogether. I mentioned nitrate of soda; it is, perhaps, one of the most useful manures that a farmer uses, and the price does not fall. There is a protection or a company, or something of the kind, to proctect their output so that the price does not fall, and, therefore, the price of nitrate of soda remains at 9*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* or 9*l.* 10*s.* 4*d.*

7947. And the price of sulphate of ammonia remains about the same?—That generally goes with it.

7948. Therefore the low price of corn that you are receiving, and the cheaper price of manures does not compensate the farmer?—It does not.

Potato growing.

7949. You seem to point to something to relieve your trade in the shape of growing potatoes. Has potatoe growing been a profitable part of your business of farming?—I think that, perhaps, on the whole I have done better. I have saved myself a bit, and put myself in a better position by growing more this last year. I grew a pretty good quality of potatoes, and they have stood in my stead a bit as it were.

7950. That is perhaps exceptional?—That quality is not generally grown in my neighbourhood.

7951. When you speak of those exceptional cases it does not prove the rule?—Quite right.

7952. Potatoes, as a rule, in Scotland (and perhaps it is as bad in England) are sold at a ruinous price?—They are sold at a very low price.

7953. What is your price per ton?—Potatoes now can be bought—you are asking generally—in some parts of Suffolk, and in a great many parts of Cambridge and Norfolk at 1*l.* to 22*s.* and 23*s.* per ton.

7954. That would pay neither rent nor expenses?—That is an extraordinary low price, but they grow a large quantity; I happen to grow a better quality.

Rent.

7955. Considering what you have seen and what lies before us, do you think that the rent of land is likely to be maintained?—It cannot get lower in many cases, unless it goes to nothing.

7956. Is it likely to improve at present prices with the present produce of farming?—I hardly know how to answer that question; they are so variable. In some cases where they are at the lowest with those rents that we are speaking of, nominal rents of some 5*s*. per acre, they will be able to be maintained by partial cultivation and taking advantage of what a man might sell. Where they are holding under an old hire they will have to come out, and drop down to those prices, but with the prices of last Michaelmas they cannot get much lower.

Low prices.

7957. Do you think that the prices of produce—corn and beef, and mutton, and wool have seen their lowest?—I cannot say that they have seen their lowest.

The currency.

7958. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You told us, I think, in reply to Mr. Chaplin, a little time ago, that you used the phrase "circulating medium" advisedly, and that you were of opinion that the restriction of the circulating medium of the world within the last 20 years by the demonetisation of silver has been largely the cause of the fall of prices within the last 20 or 25 years. Do you adhere to that opinion as a matter of theory that prices depend upon the quantity of the circulating medium?—Yes, I do.

7959. Have you considered the discussions which have taken place upon the point, and are you aware that there is a very large body of expert opinion to the effect that prices do not depend upon the quantity of the circulating medium, but that the quantity of the circulating medium has an effect upon the price, and follows upon the prices?—The quantity of the circulating medium follows on the prices, do you mean?

7960. Yes?—I was not aware of that. I have heard this question discussed by experts at different times, and I have formed the opinion that those who advocate the reinstating of silver to its former position, and by that means increasing the circulating medium, have by far the best of the argument.

7961. Are you not aware that there is a large body of expert opinion to the contrary effect; for instance, that there is the opinion of Mr. Tooke, who is, perhaps, the most famous author upon prices, to the effect that the quantity of circulating medium is an effect of the price, but the changes precede the expansion or contraction of the circulating medium?—I was not aware of that.

7962. I wish to know, as a matter of fact, whether you include the circulation of paper as part of the circulating medium, or do you not? In what sense do you use the phrase, "Circulating medium"?—Well, I must, of course, give my opinion; I do not know if it is worth very much. I think this, with reference to the circulating medium, it might be paper, but you must not back the paper with gold; if backed with gold it is practically gold. I hold this: I have been met in discussing this matter with a friend of mine, by his saying, "I pay by cheque." But I say that that is not a paper payment; it is a gold payment. If I give you a cheque in payment of anything I may buy of you, either I have got that gold at my bankers to pay that cheque, or my bankers have sufficient confidence in me to pay it.

7963. But I am taking the case that there is no gold at the bankers or anywhere else. The paper is a circulating medium, and is effective enough to all intents and purposes?—As long as the man's credit is good behind the paper; but you must not put gold behind; if you do it is gold.

7964. But still there is no actual gold representing the paper?—Then you come to the question as to whether Her Majesty's Government, and the credit of the individual is sufficiently strong to back the paper. I think that paper is no use without a sufficient amount of gold behind it, or something which is gold's equivalent.

7965. Why a sufficient amount of gold? "A sufficient amount" does not give us much light upon what you have said?—It is rather difficult to say what is a sufficient amount of gold. The reserve necessary to hold is a question for the banking authorities of England, I suppose, or for the Manager of the Bank of England. Our present system is this: that where notes are issued, there is gold behind those notes, and they are exchangeable for gold at any time.

7966. But, as a matter of fact, there is an indefinitely varied amount of the metal which is standard money, which is kept for the purpose of making sure of the payment of the circulating medium of paper. Some people may have 5 per cent., and some 10 per cent., and some 20 per cent., and some 30 per cent. on account of the paper which is issued?—I do not quite gather what you mean.

7967. I mean that the quantity of bullion which is kept to secure the payment varies indefinitely; so that when you use the words "circulating medium," with reference to the paper, what I wish to know is, whether it is the paper which regulates the price, or the gold at the back of it?—I take it that it is necessary to keep a sufficient amount of bullion to honour that paper when presented.

7968. Then it is not the quantity of the circulating medium which determines the prices, but the quantity of bullion which the paper represents?—The bullion is the circulating medium, although the paper represents it. The gold is behind the paper.

7969. Still, I think that is using "circulating medium" in a sense in which a writer like Mr. Tooke would not use it?—I may use the phrase "circulating medium" in a sense in which an expert would not use it. I take it for all intents and purposes that money is the circulating medium; whether that money is gold or silver, it is the circulating medium.

7970. But not the paper?—We have always thought that in this country money is behind paper. There was a time previous to 1821 and 1823, when there was an issue of bank notes without gold behind it. That was in times when there was a great deal of harassing by wars and so on; but I understand that that paper was suddenly withdrawn, and that, on the withdrawal of that paper, down went prices. It was a contraction of the circulating medium that caused the fall of prices.

7971. That was the withdrawal of inconvertible paper, but I am speaking of convertible paper?—Convertible paper has money behind it.

7972. But that money may be sometimes 5 per cent. of the quantity of paper, and sometimes 30 and 50 per cent., so that it is very important to know whether you mean by "circulating medium" the quantity of paper, or the quantity of bullion which it represents?—That is a detail of this question which, not being an expert, I am not able to answer, but I take it that this country has practically gold behind its paper.

7973. And other countries?—I do not know what the other countries do in all cases. I suppose they honour their paper; whether Russia does or not I do not know.

7974. This all bears upon the question of how much the circulating medium of the world has been affected by the monetary changes of the last 20 or 25 years, because if you include the paper in the circulating medium, you may have one answer, and if you do not include it, you may have a different answer?—That is an intricate question that I cannot answer.

7975. But is not it a material one? You told me that you used the phrase "circulating medium," advisedly?—As long as the circulating medium, whether paper or gold, be current and exchangeable, it must be exchangeable for gold. I do not know how the credit of the world could be kept up without gold behind it.

7976. Because if you secure the paper by 50 per cent. of gold being kept, and then at a later time by 20 per cent of gold, you might have diminished all the gold in the interval, but there would be no change in prices; no restriction of the circulating medium in the sense in which you are now using it?—I do not know how that would be.

7977. Because the 20 per cent. goes as far as the 50 per cent.?—This is an international and not a national subject. Whatever may be done in this country, and whatever may be kept behind the paper in the shape of gold or bullion, the money question is not a national, but an international question; and the circulating medium, and articles of that kind, are so mixed, that if you contract the amount of the circulating medium in any one quarter of the world, you contract it all over.

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7978. Do you wish "circulating medium" to be described so as to include paper or not?—I use it to include paper, and I take it, that behind that paper, there is gold. I am not capable of going into that detail. It is a question that I have not considered. I imagine that the authorities of the Bank of England or Her Majesty's Government, or whoever controls money matters, find it necessary to keep gold behind their paper, and whether it be from tranquillity and peace, or whatever it may be, they have sometimes, more or less, it is a question that I cannot answer.

7979. I ask the question because I believe that, as a matter of fact, there is a large body of expert opinion to the effect that the quantity of the circulating medium in the technical sense of the word, in the last 20 or 25 years has enormously increased, in fact, to a degree that it never increased before?—I take it that more of the circulating medium is required as population and commodities increase; and there must be a normal increase of that circulating medium in a just proportion to population and commodities.

7980. Then the contention is that it has increased?—I understand your contention is that it has increased.

7981. I am not speaking of my opinion, but I am saying there is a large body of expert opinion to the effect that the circulating medium, using the phrase in its technical sense, has enormously increased within the last 25 years. Your statement is to the effect that it has been diminished?—That the circulating medium, so far as that is comprised of the metals silver and gold, silver being withdrawn, has decreased. As to the amount in circulation I cannot say anything about it. Even if it has increased it would be necessary in proportion to the increase of population and commodities.

7982. You cannot carry us any further with the facts of the question as to what the quantity of the circulating medium has been, or is?—No.

7983. With regard to the demonetisation of silver and the withdrawal of the silver, which is the phrase you have just used, how much silver has been withdrawn?—I do not know the amount. I did not happen to come here with figures connected with the money question. I do not pose as an expert on this subject. Had I done so I should have looked up the figures. I take it if these various European countries, and now India, with all the silver which is necessary for their currency purposes, use another standard, and have displaced silver, that that would be a considerable sum.

7984. I am asking the question because it is a question of fact, whether silver has been withdrawn to any extent at all?—I mean the output of silver. I believe at one time silver was coinable by the owners of it.

7985. Still speaking of the withdrawal of silver, I wish to know in what sense the phrase was used; how much silver has been withdrawn by Germany, for instance?—If it was optional for the owner of silver to have it coined, and now it is not, it would make a difference.

7986. But that is not the same thing as the withdrawal; I am speaking now of the withdrawal and the displacement of silver?—Supposing the same demand after its withdrawal, there is still a greater demand for gold.

7987. But I am asking now to what extent, as a matter of fact, has silver been withdrawn?—That I cannot say; I call it a withdrawal or displacement, silver not taking the place that it did in the nations of the world.

7988. But that is different from actual withdrawal from monetary circulation?—Whether that is so I cannot answer.

7989. It is a question of theory you are coming upon; you are using the phrase "withdrawal of silver," and I wish to know, exactly, in what sense the phrase is used?—The sense in which I used it was, that silver being the standard of those various countries which comprise the Latin Union, and also of America, and now those countries having adopted another standard, they have displaced silver. I, perhaps, misapplied "withdrawal," and should have used the word "displaced" or "abandoned."

7990. You do not mean that silver was the standard, but you mean a bimetallic standard?—They were silver countries, were they not?

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7991. I should not say that France was a silver country?—Was not Italy a silver country?

7992. I think not; I wish to know what the meaning of your language is?—India is a silver country, or has been till now.

7993. I am putting all these questions because I am coming to a further question, and I think I may as well put it at once You say that you wish silver to be restored to the position which it occupied 20 or 30 years ago; is that so?—Yes.

7994. That does not include the proposition that the United Kingdom should become a country with a bimetallic standard?—Whether that does or does not, I do not know. I do not ask, and I do not suggest, and I do not think it is right for any Government to tamper with the circulating medium, that is, that they should not by any arbitrary action, either suddenly increase or suddently decrease the circulating medium.

7995. Still, you speak of the restoration of silver, and I wish to know how far that goes in your opinion?—I take it that those countries used silver to a very great deal larger extent than now, and so if silver were placed in the position it then occupied, it would be much more largely employed, and that would be, practically, putting it on a proper footing.

7996. But you do not propose anything with reference to the money of the United Kingdom in what you have said?—That is a matter I have not gone into, as to whether the United Kingdom should raise silver to a standard metal, and make more use of it.

7997. The contention of the people who propose the bimetallic standard as a remedy is that the United Kingdom ought to join in because the other countries will not do it unless the United Kingdom does?—Well, that would be a difficulty, but I should like to see the circulating medium current, because I think it would mean better prices.

7998. That is proposing something more than the restoration of silver to the position it occupied 20 or 25 years ago?—I should not object to seeing it go a little further. If the gold has a limited supply, and the requirements of the country are greater that would be an argument to make more use than we have done of it.

7999. That is a different thing from what you proposed in your evidence in chief?—That is the restoration of silver; if I did not then suggest quite far enough there is no reason why I should not amend it.

8000. There is another reason why I may put this question, but what I wish to ask now is whether the restoration of silver would not be a thing that would have no effect towards the end which you propose, because, as a matter of fact, more silver has been used for manufacturing purposes of late years than there would have been with the plan of restoration of silver which you propose?—I should not have thought so, but I do not know.

8001. I give you one instance upon which I would like your opinion, and that is that the United States was not a silver using country 20 or 25 years ago at all, and since then it has used much more, 100,000,000*l* sterling of silver?—The United States has, to a very great extent, developed and grown during the last few years.

8002. Still it has used silver as it did not use it 20 or 25 years ago. The United States down to 1878 was an inconvertible country, and I wish to know what the effect of the restoration is?—If they used paper I take it that the United States' requirements on the two standard metals which form the circulating medium of the world are almost new, and that would be a strong argument for it to be used.

8003. As a matter of fact they have used silver. Now, I must come to the other questions. Supposing all prices at the present moment of agricultural produce were to be multiplied by 10, I assume from what you say that you would consider that that would be an enormous advantage to the agricultural interest?—All prices multiplied by 10?

8004. Yes, all agricultural prices multiplied by 10?—Well, taking such an extraordinary jump it would make some of us very poor men rich at once.

8005. That is the hypothesis; but supposing at the same time as to your rent and your wages and your rates and all your outgoings, and all the things that you purchase with the surplus which you obtain, that the prices of those are also to be multiplied by 10; would you be any better off with that multiplication?—We should be better off, we should have a better start. We were beaten by a continual fall in prices—what we had two or ten years ago is not worth the money to-day, and some of us have found the pressure of paying in gold so burdensome on account of the gradual depreciation, as I think, through the withdrawal of silver.

8006. I assume that everything is instantly multiplied by 10?—It would better our start with that good capital—although we had to pay equally in proportion, that capital which we then realised would set us going.

8007. What advantage would you have in your surplus being increased to 10 times what it was when it would not buy anything that you wished to buy any more than the surplus that you have now, I do not see the advantage?—I am myself a poor man, an owner of property with a little mortgage on it; if a sack of wheat or beans was 10 times its own value and enabled me to pay a certain interest, I would have a bigger surplus.

8008. But the mortgage is also multiplied by 10?—Yes.

8009. That is my hypothesis?—It would take time to do that.

8010. Supposing everything was multiplied by 10?—But the land is mine subject to a fixed gold charge.

8011. I am entitled to put the hypothesis: supposing everything was to be once multiplied by 10, you would not be any better off?—Excuse me, your hypothesis would not possibly come about, because you cannot multiply a man's liabilities, they are existing ones.

8012. I wish to put the hypothesis to you, if everything was multiplied by 10 you would not be better off than you are now?—If everything was multiplied by 10, it is rather a difficult question to answer—it depends upon what a man's liabilities are.

8013. Fixed liabilities are also multiplied by 10?—Yes, if you have no profits; I do not know how to follow you.

8014. What you want, in point of fact, is a rise in the price of agricultural produce without any other change occurring at the same time?—No, I do not say that—other changes would occur. I do not ask for that, it would not follow. What I put before you is: that there has been a depreciation through an arbitrary change in the currency, and that it is not right, either to arbitrarily reduce or to arbitrarily increase the circulating medium. I think it would be the duty of governments and nations to keep the amount of the circulating medium as near as possible at a normal rate as compared with the population and commodities and I think, wrongly or rightly, that that circulating medium was reduced by the action taken with regard to the silver.

8015. But still the effect of any change in money (I do not say at once) would be ultimately to bring about the change that I have put to you: supposing you increase the money by 10 you would increase everything by 10, and when all the changes had been allowed for you would be no better off?—But that ultimately would take a long time to bring about, just as the present one has been gradually settling upon us for many years. Supposing prices did expand, during the expansion, we who have a contract payable in gold would relieve ourselves of a difficulty.

8016. You want the change because you think you are so placed that you would benefit from the fact of the change itself although ultimately everybody would be exactly as they were before?—If you talk of "ultimately," after ruining the present generation ultimately, say 50 or 20 years if you please, and say 1*s.* will buy what 2*s.* does now ultimately when things come to a settled condition again, and circulating mediums and all things have adjusted themselves, then it would not matter.

8017. You are proposing a change which is to unsettle the state of things because things have settled down to the low prices?—But they have not settled down with me because I have got a mortgage payable in gold, and I cannot see why I should pay that interest in gold with those prices that have been brought about arbitrarily.

8018. But still if you had no mortgage you would not be interested in the question?—I might have some other contract. I have one which lasts over two years, the hire of a farm; if prices gradually get shrinking they will put me in a worse position, nobody has hope, and no inducement to employ. That is the state of things brought about by the existing condition of money.

8019. Are you quite sure that you are correct in anticipating a further fall in prices?—I am not quite sure; I am not sure that they are not showing signs of going further down.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. T. Carrington Smith called and examined.

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8020. (*Chairman.*) You are a tenant farmer living in Staffordshire, I believe?—Yes.

8021. And you also own land?—Yes.

8022. How much do you hold yourself?—I occupy nearly 250 acres.

8023. How much do you own?—150.

8024. Do you let that?—I let it in two farms.

8025. I think you have been elected for some years chairman of the Staffordshire Chamber of Agriculture?—For many years.

8026. Do you come here to represent that Association?—I do.

Reduction of rent.

8027. What has been the fall of rents in your district?—Do you speak of the whole county or of my own immediate district?

8028. Of your own immediate district?—I am able to give you exactly the fall of rents in the estate on which I am an occupier, by the kind permission of the landlord's agent. It is between 10 and 12 per cent.

8029. Whom do you hold under?—Lord Bagot.

8030. What is the size of his property?—Nearly 9,000 acres in Staffordshire.

8031. The reduction in rent has been about 12 per cent. you say; what does the rent amount to, do you know?—Now, per acre, it is 24*s.* 6*d.*; I think that gives 10,000*l.* odd. I have the figures.

8032. Has that reduction of rent been sufficient to enable the tenants to remain and to keep their farms?—I am sorry to say there have been great changes during the time of my occupation. Mine is a long occupation of 38 years, but almost every farm has changed twice round me, excepting in my own case.

8033. Has that change been more in modern than in past times?—On that estate?

8034. Yes?—I think so.

Arrears of rent.

8035. Are there many arrears on the property now?—There are none.

8036. In 1880 what were the arrears?—3,200*l.*

8037. I suppose that was due to the very bad year of 1879?—Partly so, and partly to the claim under the law of distress which the landlord then had.

8038. Then the absence of arrears at the present moment tends to show that the tenants have been able to pay, and that the reduction of the rent has been a fair one?—The financial condition of the tenants and also of the landlords with respect to the receipt of rent is better now than it was a dozen years ago.

8039. Better than it was?—Yes, partly because of the reduction of rent, and partly because the payment has been more regularly enforced.

Characteristics of farm.

8040. What is the general condition of the land; is it arable land, or was it arable land at one time?—The arable area has been very largely reduced, and the grass area proportionately increased during the time I speak of.

Land laid down to grass.

8041. Has the land been laid down in permanent pasture?—Yes.

8042. To a large extent?—To a large extent.

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8043. Take your own case, what has been the reduction of the arable?—When my tenancy began in 1856 it was one-half arable and one-half pasture; now it is one-eighth arable.

8044. Only one-eighth? — Yes, and seven-eighths pasture and meadow.

8045. Then, I suppose, it is due to the extent of land which has been laid down to grass that the rent has been maintained to the extent it has, and that the condition is fairly prosperous?—Largely due.

8046. How has the laying down to grass been carried out?—Sometimes by mutual arrangement, and sometimes by the tenant only.

8047. Where it has been done by agreement with the landlord, has the landlord contributed?—I was unable myself to come to any arrangement with the landlord, so I did it myself and made the arrangement after the work was done. That arrangement has now been made.

8048. What is the arrangement now?—The arrangement is that by a transfer of the arable land to permanent pasture, that is the tenant giving up his right to plough, the landlord engages at the end of the tenancy to pay 5*l.* an acre to the tenant for the laying down of that land, the tenant on his side agreeing not to plough it at all under any circumstances.

8049. When it is laid down?—After it has been laid down.

8050. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is that not dependent upon a certain sum having been spent per acre?—I think I must explain. The arrangement was not made until the land had been down, a good deal of it, 12 or 15 years, and so there was the valuation of the landlord, and my own valuation also.

8051. (*Chairman.*) Has that been generally the arrangement between landlords and tenants?—No, it is quite an exceptional one.

8052. What is the usual plan?—It frequently happens that a landlord engages to give the seeds and one top dressing, which you might put at from 50*s.* to 3*l.* an acre, then the tenant engages for a transfer of the schedule. At the same time it is only right to say that if that were done *ab initio* the landlord would be bound to submit also to a reduction of rent, but as in my own case the arrangement was not made until the land had been down—from 20 to 25 years a lot of it—so the letting value of that land was very greatly increased at the time the bargain was being made, so that it consequently followed that the landlord sacrificed no rent and is now receiving a rent which represents only a deduction of 1*s.* an acre from the highest point.

8053. I do not quite understand it—you say the arrangement was not made until you had laid down the grass for some years?—If I must put it, that is an arrangement which was forced by myself. We had a new agent with whom, I must say, I was not on good terms, and I felt that my position was unsafe under the law with respect to the land being laid down. I said to him, Now I must have an arrangement made with respect to the laying down. "I know," he says, "you are entitled to it"; but I could not get it until I gave him notice that I should plough it all up; the consequence was that he came over, and went over the farm with me and made terms. I was sorry to enforce it in such a way, but it left no bad feeling behind it, and it gave me the power of bargain.

8054. On the whole, do you think it a fair arrangement?—I do think it a fair arrangement.

8055. Is it the general arrangement that the landlord contributes, at the starting, the value of the seed?—I think I must not say general arrangement—sometimes there is that arrangement.

8056. What is the general arrangement?—It frequently happens that the tenant does it on speculation; sometimes he receives nothing whatever, at other times he enforces the arrangement by the threat of ploughing up.

Reduction of rent.

8057. In the case of large arable farms in your district, has there been a considerable fall of rent?—I am able to state from information that has been furnished to me—I cannot give the names—that on large estates where the proportion of arable land is great there has been a fall of 20 per cent. in the letting value of large farms—when I say large farms I mean farms of 400 acres, and so on.

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8058. In the case of medium sized farms, principally pasture, what has happened?—There has been no fall at all.

8059. No fall at all?—Not on farms up to 150 acres all in grass.

8060. (*Viscount Cobham.*) What part of Staffordshire are you speaking of?—Mid-Staffordshire.

Competition for farms.

8061. (*Chairman.*) Are there many applicants for vacant farms in your district?—Yes; whenever a farm under 200 acres in good condition is vacant there is no difficulty whatever in letting it.

8062. Then on the whole the depression of agriculture in your district, if it is measured by rents, has not been considerable?—I think I put it in my paper that, in my own judgment taking the average of the whole county, it is about 10 per cent.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

8063. Have you any opinion to give upon the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes, I have.

8064. What is your opinion about it?—That it is practically inoperative.

8065. How is that; is that because the custom of the country is more favourable to the tenants?—The custom of the country has gradually become more favourable, partly owing no doubt to the passing of the Act, because the valuers by arrangement amongst themselves have increased the things for which they give compensation under valuations that do not take place under the Act.

8066. The valuations do not take place according to the scheme of the Act, but I suppose claims are made?—Not under the Act.

8067. Not made under the Act?—I think I may honestly say that both landlords and tenants in my neighbourhood prefer not to conclude their tenancy under the Act, because of the fearful amount of legal uncertainty there is.

Compensation for improvements.

8068. Have you any recommendation to make with regard to an amendment of the Act; do you think it can be simplified so as to be brought more in accord with your customary arrangements?—Yes. Personally I wish myself that the tenant's claims for unexhausted improvements should be unrestricted by schedules, that he should have a right, of which he could not be deprived, to recover the full value of any agricultural improvement made by him.

8069. Would you make no exceptions to those?—No, granting that the word "agricultural" was in before "improvements."

8070. Would you allow the tenant to make any permanent improvements that he thinks fit?—I would, subject to the valuation.

8071. Such as laying down to grass?—Certainly.

8072. Or the erection of buildings?—Yes, subject, of course——

8073. Subject to what?—Subject to the decision of the arbitrator; it might be an improvement or it might not, it might simply be an expenditure.

8074. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) That is material—with the consent of the landlord or without?—Without the consent of the landlord.

8075. He might put up what he liked?—Yes, but then it would be at his own risk.

8076. (*Chairman.*) Of course a building might be erected by the tenant which the arbitrator would not hold to be an improvement?—I would not give a shilling for a silo erected by a tenant—I would not give him a shilling, nor a brick, if I were called upon to arbitrate for a tenant putting up a silo.

8077. On the ground that it does not really add to the value?—Because it does not add to the value.

8078. Then, I see, you would give an absolute and indefeasible right to the tenant in respect to any agricultural improvement effected by him?—He proving that the land has risen in value—the onus of proof being on him.

8079. Including draining and everything—whatever it may be?—Yes.

8080. Take planting; would you allow the tenant to plant without the landlord's consent?—An orchard?

8081. Yes, an orchard?—I would.

The law of distress.

8082. Then with regard to the law of distress, have you formed an opinion about it?—I have, a strong one.

8083. What is that?—I would abolish it.

8084. You do not think it has any value?—The maintenance of distress for one year in the case of small tenants has none whatever, because it invites men to take farms who have not sufficient capital to take them, and I see many instances where the small tenant has lost the capital that he had, it being insufficient when he entered.

8085. By being induced to enter upon the farm, trusting to this protection?—That is so.

8086. But for the farmers who are now in possession, who are now tenants, might it not be rather an undesirable thing for them to abolish the law of distress: might it not at once give rise to the landlord pressing his claims at once?—I will give you an instance on my own estate: there are now no arrears, and the tenants are in better financial position, partly because the payment of the rent has been regularly enforced.

8087. Might it not lead to the rent being demanded in advance?—Yes, it would probably.

8088. You do not think that that would be a disadvantage in the long run?—It would be a decided advantage to the man's capital; he would take the farm at a less rental because he paid cash.

8089. Then the existing law rather tends to the introduction into the business of men of smaller capital?—The abolition of the law of distress would restrict competition to men with sufficient capital to take the farms, therefore it would induce capital to come into the occupation of land.

8090. Wherefore it seems to me rather to follow that the law is favourable to the men of small means?—No, I do not think it is; it leads them frequently to ruin.

8091. That is to say it may lead?—It does.

8092. It does lead?—Yes.

8093. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do you say that the present law conduces to the larger occupation of land; that is to say, that more land is occupied under it than would otherwise be the case?—I did not go quite so far as that.

8094. The less competition there is, the less land there would be in cultivation in all probability?—We have every acre in cultivation in my county.

8095. You have got the men with capital to take it under the present law of distress?—Yes.

8096. (*Chairman.*) The whole of the land in your county is in cultivation?—Yes, in occupation.

8097. That being so, the effect of the law is, as I understand you to say, to widen the field of competition, and to bring into the field of competition a number of men with insufficient capital?—Who farm the land badly, and who eventually are ruined by the occupation of that land.

Adulteration.

8098. Then with regard to the adulteration of farm produce, what is your opinion?—I have a very strong feeling upon that. I wish the same principle to be applied to adulteration as has been already applied to contagious disease. I would check the importation of agricultural products at the ports by analytical examination. I would stop the importation of adulterated goods into this country, just as we have stopped the importation of animals from countries infected with contagious disease. With respect to the internal management of adulterated goods, I would have a uniform system of action all over the country, so that, for instance, by a duplicate means of the local authorities and the Government, we had certain fixed standards of purity for certain goods all over the country, for instance milk, for instance butter. There is just now before the stipendiary magistrate in Manchester, the question of butter coming in from Ireland, adulterated by water. The information was laid with respect to the butter that it contained 25 per cent. of water. Mr. Headlam, who is the stipendiary magistrate, in giving his decision asked that the Government should fix the standard. I have letters here in my bag from the county analyst of Staffordshire, and from the inspectors in Staffordshire, who also ask for a fixed standard in milk, and for an examination of all imported agricultural produce at the port of entry. I have received a communication from Mr. Harold Faber, the Chief Commissioner of the Danish Government, who has been trying to bring about—as possibly some here know—an international conference with respect to the importation of dairy goods, and he is entirely in accord with the county analyst of Staffordshire, and with the inspectors in Staffordshire. I think, speaking from my position as county councillor in Staffordshire, I may say that Staffordshire is one of those counties which has exceptionally enforced the powers under the Food and Drugs Act; but our county analyst and Mr. Harold Faber, and the inspectors all agree that it is impossible for them to carry out the Food and Drugs Act unless inspection is enforced at the ports of entry, and unless, also the local authorities do their duty in the boroughs.

Effect of depression on landlords and tenants.

8099. You said just now that the average reduction of rent in your county is about 10 per cent. Do you consider that the depression of agriculture has been more felt by the tenants than by the landlords?—I have a very strong opinion, and I have been obliged to form it because of the social condition of the farmhouses around me. I do not speak of my own farm house, because fortunately I have an income independent of farming, but of the farms around my own, upon which the tenants have been changed several times during my residence in the neighbourhood. Farms with a rateable value of 500*l.* formerly had, we will say, two female household servants. On the farms immediately adjoining me—several of them I know quite well—there is no female household servant at the present time. The work of the house, sometimes including the dairy work—not often, because milk selling is more prevalent—is done by the members of the farmer's family. I am only stating this as a fact, not as a fact that I regret at all, but I am stating it to show that the depression has pressed socially upon the tenant in my judgment very much more than it has upon the landlord or upon the labourer.

Reduction in labour

8100. Is there less hired labour than formerly?—There is less hired labour than formerly.

8101. Are the farmers and their families doing more work themselves?—That is so.

Changes in tenancy.

8102. When changes have taken place in farms has a somewhat different class of tenant come in?—That is so.

8103. Are they men brought up in the neighbourhood, or do they come from a distance?—They come from the north of the county and from the adjoining county of Derbyshire, and in some instances from Cheshire.

8104. Are they men who are accustomed to do some work themselves?—Yes, and whose habit was also to have boys and young men living in the house as part of their household.

Changes in system of cultivation.

8105. Has there been a concurrent change rather in the nature of the cultivation, that is in making the farm more of a pasture farm than of an arable farm?—There is a very large increase of dairying.

8106. You think it is rather due to that that a different class of farmers has come in?—That is so.

8107. The men who were formerly mainly arable farmers, of a somewhat superior style?—Yes.

8108. They have left and their places are now occupied by dairy farmers, who do more of the business themselves?—That is so.

8109. That would tend to show that the effect of the depression has been to vary the cultivation of the land and to bring in a somewhat different class?—It has brought in quite a different class. You must bear in mind that I am speaking now of a district where the arable portion has been decreased very largely indeed.

8110. That I understand, it has been very largely decreased; in fact the farm has ceased to be an arable farm, it has become a pasture farm?—I may state with respect to my own farm, that I shall not thresh a grain of corn this year of last year's harvest, the straw and corn will be cut up together; there will be no threshing and no grinding.

8111. Will you say that is the case with farms as large as 400 or 500 acres, or not?—I think it would not be; several of the farms adjoining me are about that size, and there is some threshing there, but much less than formerly.

8112. I mean has the change of class of tenant applied to farms as large as 400 or 500 acres, or is it mainly in the smaller class of farms?—It has applied to farms up to 400 acres.

8113. Would a man farming farm of 300 or 400 acres work himself?—Certainly

8114. Formerly would he not do so?—Not nearly to so great an extent.

Competition for farms.

8115. Then apparently there is considerable competition for farms of this kind, and the result has been that rents have not been lowered so much as you would expect in times of depression?—It is a natural result where there is competition, but I hold that the landlord is perfectly entitled to get what rent he can get.

8116. Are there plenty of men of sufficient capital to work farms of this kind forthcoming?—Yes; I think the statement that I have already made, that there are no arrears of rent on the estate, shows that.

8117. It shows that they have capital enough, and that when farms are vacant, men of capital, although of a somewhat different class socially, are ready to come in?—Yes, and they pay their rents well.

Wages.

8118. Then as regards the agricultural labourers, what has been the effect upon them?—Their position is wonderfully improved.

8119. Have the wages been maintained in your district?—The wages are not so high as they were 20 years ago, during the seventies.

8120. What has been the reduction?—About 2*s.* a week from the highest point in the seventies.

8121. What was the highest point?—17*s.* a week with cottage and garden rent, and rate free.

8122. They have been reduced to 15*s.*?—And no rent or rates to pay, with coal drawn, and other perquisites, such as the growth of potatoes in the field.

8123. In considering the fall of prices in the interval, do you consider they are better off now at their present rate of wages than they were at the time you speak of?—Vastly better off, because they have fresh meat regularly now, whereas 25 years ago it was quite exceptional for a cottager to have mutton or beef in his cottage.

Labouring population.

8124. Has there been much falling off in the number of labourers?—We have not so many labourers, but the cottages are occupied—all of them.

8125. How do you account for that?—It so happens that in my parish and in the adjoining parishes there are a large number of old people who are never dispossessed, and who are living on and are not moved.

8126. Supported by their relatives, I presume?—By their relatives, and sometimes by out-door relief. I may say that the workhouse test is not enforced rigidly. It very frequently happens that a small sum in weekly payments is granted by the union, in addition to the payment exacted from the relatives of the old people; that is to say, we go upon the principle of not breaking up the home if possible.

Reduction of rent.

8127. I think you will say that the reductions in rental do not altogether cover the difference between the present income of the landlords and that in former times, that there is a greater outlay on the part of the landlords?—The landlord is required now, and I think very properly required, to equip his farms more thoroughly than he did when the times were very good, and I think that the difference between the actual rental paid by the tenant, and that which comes net into the pocket of the landlord is greater than it used to be.

8128. Has that been necessitated by the change in the cultivation of the land, do these pasture farms require more buildings?—Partly so; but irrespective of that the tenant in the Midland Counties, I think, is asking for the landlord to do more for the equipment of the farm than he used to do. The tenant 25 years ago frequently used to lay out money in permanent buildings, quite knowing that he had no right of recovery, but that he was at liberty to lay out money without asking the landlord. Now he would go straight to the landlord, and I think very properly say, Look here, we must have this done, and the landlord very properly says, well, I will do it.

8129. Is that because the tenants in those days held under lease?—They do not hold under lease in Staffordshire, they are almost all annual tenants, and have been as long as I have known it.

8130. But the tenants in those days, I suppose, being prosperous, expended their own capital?—They did, foolishly I hold, but they did.

8131. Trusting to their landlord to compensate them at the end of the tenancy, I presume; did they get compensation or not at the end?—No, they would not get compensation.

8132. Now the landlord is expected to make this outlay himself?—Yes. What you remarked just now has a good deal to do with it, that is to say, more live stock is kept upon the farm, and the requirements of buildings for the tenants consequently are greater, inasmuch as more shedding is required.

8133. Then the reduction of 10 per cent. hardly indicates the full effect of the change upon the landlord?—It does not.

The law of distress.

8134. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) With regard to what you said about the abolition of the law of distress, I understand that you admit that it would necessitate, perhaps, the payment of rent in advance, is that so?—It might do, but not necessarily.

8135. Where that did happen, I think you said it would be of great advantage to the capitalist, who could afford it?—It would, he would take his farm at less money because he paid cash.

8136. Now, in the case of the small men who could not pay the rent in advance, what would be the effect upon them?—We should still have the small men, but we should have the small men with more capital.

8137. But if it were necessary to pay the rent in advance and they were unable to do it they would be put out of the business altogether; is that not so?—Some of them would, and properly so, too.

8138. Whether they might think it properly so or not the effect would be that it would be injurious to these small men?—I think not.

8139. Not if they were deprived of their possibility of carrying on ther business?—Their possibility and probability of ruin.

8140. I suppose they ought to be the best judges of that for themselves?—I have seen many cases where they have walked into ruin by that.

8141. And have you seen no cases of small men who have not been in a position to pay their rent in advance, but who have succeeded or who are not ruined?—I could not prove a negative.

8142. Then I gathered from you that on the whole, although it might be a great advantage to the large capitalist in many cases, it must be more or less of a disadvantage to these small men?—No, I do not own that at all.

8143. You do not think so?—I do not think so.

8144. But I understood you to admit that there were cases in which it would prevent them undertaking the occupation of farming at all?—Not having sufficient capital it would, and I should consider it desirable.

8145. But they might have sufficient capital, as I understand you, to conduct their farm with, although that capital would not be sufficient to enable them to pay the rent in advance?—You are assuming that the rent would always be demanded in advance.

8146. I take it upon your own statement that it might necessitate the payment of the rent in advance—that would be one of the results of the abolition of the law of distress you say, do you not?—Yes.

8147. Now I take the case of a small man who has capital enough to conduct his farm, but not sufficient capital to pay the rent in advance besides; in such a case it seems to me that it would inflict a great hardship upon him?—I do not think so.

8148. Why, if the fact of the payment of the rent in advance prevented his taking a farm which he would have been able to take and conduct with success without it?—I do not grant his success, I say his ruin.

8149. In cases where he has not sufficient capital you say that it would lead to his ruin?—And does.

8150. But I am assuming a case, which is a perfectly possible one, of a tenant who has sufficient capital to conduct a farm but not to pay the rent in advance besides; surely in cases of that sort you deprive him of an opportunity of earning his livelihood?—I as landlord should not object to let a farm to a tenant without the payment in advance, but I should consider that I was taking that risk upon myself which now is taken by other people.

8151. Yes, but there might be landlords who did not choose to take that view, and having lost the security which is given them by the present law of distress, they might say: "I must make sure by requiring pay-

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ment in advance." That is a case which you submitted to the Commission might possibly occur. Then I say that in such a case surely it must be a hardship upon a man who has adequate capital for the conduct of a farm and who could conduct that farm satisfactorily but for the necessity of making this payment?—I take it that if he paid the rent in advance he would get the full discount of a payment for cash and would consequently pay probably 10 per cent. less for the use of that land than if he went upon credit.

8152. I now will ask you, whether in your opinion the abolition of the law of distress would not in any way injuriously affect the smaller farmers?—It would be to their advantage because they would take their land at less rent, they would be in a better financial position, and the receipt of the rent by the landlord would be safer than it now is even with this additional law of distress.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

8153. I want, please, to ask you one or two questions with regard to your proposals as to the amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act. I understand from the *précis* with which you have provided us that you wish Section 1 of the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883 to be amended so as to run as follows:—"Where "a tenant has made on his holding any improvement "after the commencement of this Act he shall be "entitled at the determination of a tenancy to obtain "from the landlord as," &c., to the end of the section?—Yes.

Compensation for improvements.

8154. In that, I presume, you include any improvements that a tenant may think it desirable to make, whether the landlord's consent is given to these improvements or not?—That is so.

8155. That amendment would, I understand, enable the tenant at the determination of the tenancy, whether he quitted the farm or not, to call upon the landlord to pay him compensation for those improvements?—Yes.

8156 Now I will take the case where a tenant has made very elaborate buildings or very considerable buildings; do you contemplate that as one of the improvements which he would be entitled by law to make?—It might not be an improvement.

8157. No; but I am assuming a case where it is an improvement?—If an improvement, yes.

8158. Among the improvements that he would be entitled to make would be buildings?—Such sum as fairly represents the value of the improvement to an incoming tenant.

8159. Those would be one of the improvements that he might make?—Yes.

8160. Then at the determination of the tenancy he would be enabled to call upon the landlord for the increased value of the holding due to that improvement?—Due to that improvement.

8161. How is that increased value to be estimated?—By arbitration.

8162. By arbitration?—Yes.

8163. Not by any increase to the rent?—The payment by the landlord to the tenant would prevent an increase to the rent, inasmuch as it would put it into the tenant's power to make his bargain before his rent could be increased.

8164. If there is to be no increase of rent, where does the increased value to the property of the landlord arise?—If they could not make terms the probability is that the landlord would get rid of his tenant.

8165. That is no answer to my question. If there is to be no increase of the rent, where does the increased value arise?—The increasing of the rent would quite be within the power of the landlord; if the tenant did not agree to pay it, then he might leave; if the farm became vacant, and if it was an improvement and the land had increased in its letting power, the landlord would immediately receive the additional rent due to that improvement.

8166. We are speaking now of a case that might arise upon the determination of a tenancy?—Yes.

8167. Now I will take the case of where the tenant quits his farm, where a tenant gives notice and leaves the farm; would he be entitled then to claim compensation from the landlord?—Certainly.

8168. He would?—Certainly.

8169. How would the value of the improvement be estimated in that case?—By arbitration.

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8170. Supposing the landlord was called upon to pay a large sum in compensation for this improvement by arbitration, and then, having to seek for a fresh tenant, he finds that he has no increase of rent, is that the position in which you think a landlord ought to be placed?—Then the arbitration would not be a correct one because it is limited by the value of the improvement to the incoming tenant.

8171. Is it not the case, as a matter of fact now, that when farms are quitted and are vacant, instead of being an increase there is almost invariably a decrease of the rent?—I have a case in point here.

8172. Yes, but would you answer that question, please: is it not usually the case, as far as you are acquainted with agricultural districts, that when a farm is now vacant instead of being an increase there is usually a decrease in the rent?—No, it is not.

8173. In what districts is that?—I am speaking now of Mid-Staffordshire. I know a farm of 150 acres which is rented at 300*l.* a year; it has been held by the tenant a long time. It is too dear; he asks for a decrease of rent of 30*l.*; the landlord does not give it; he is going next Lady-day. There are several applicants.

8174. Now this proposal of yours is to apply universally all over England; it is to be the law, I understand?—It is to be the law.

8175. You heard the evidence, I think, of the last witness?—I did, most of it.

8176. You would gather from him that it is usually the case on a change of tenancy in Suffolk at present that there is a decrease in the rent?—Yes.

8177. Now I am going to ask you to consider this case; supposing your principle is applied in Suffolk, that the tenant has made without the consent of the landlord a large outlay upon buildings; he finds at the end of a certain period that the farm no longer pays him; he gives up the farm, and when the farm is in the market the landlord finds it impossible to increase the rent, and he has, if he can let it at all, to take a great decrease; do you consider under those circumstances that the tenant is entitled to be paid compensation for his improvement?—So long as it fairly represents the value of the improvement to an incoming tenant, yes.

8178. But if there is no incoming tenant?—Then you would have a difficulty in proof.

8179. If there is no incoming tenant?—The landlord is the incoming tenant.

8180. And if owing to a fall in prices the land is absolutely worthless to cultivate, as we have been told by the last witness it frequently is, do you still think that under those circumstances the outgoing tenant ought to be compensated for his improvement which he had made without the consent and perhaps against the judgment of the landlord?—I still hold that where an improvement has been made which adds to the letting value of the farm compensation is due, and only in such case.

8181. When it adds to the letting value, but in this case that I have contemplated in Suffolk there would be no addition to the letting value, because I have taken the case of land in Suffolk, which, it is alleged, is absolutely worthless to cultivate?—If there is no letting value, but I do not believe there is such land.

8182. Then I am afraid you did not hear the evidence of the last witness?—I did not hear that it has no letting value.

8183. We have had a great deal of evidence before this Commission with regard to a quantity of land in various parts of England where there is no letting value at all, where it has been absolutely derelict?—I heard of 5*s.* an acre; but I must say I did not hear the whole of the evidence.

8184. We have had other evidence besides that; but if that were the case, if you were aware of that, if it was shown to you that such circumstances could occur, would you still think your principle applicable to all parts of England; would you still advocate this amendment?—I would still advocate the amendment so long as the tenant could prove, and only so long as that, that his improvement had added to the letting value.

8185. And that letting value is to be tested by what?—Arbitration.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to Thursday next at 12 o'clock.

For Mr. Carrington-Smith's further evidence *see* Question 9608.

Sixteenth Day.

Thursday, 22nd February 1894.

PRESENT:

The RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. BARON VERNON.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.

FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary*.
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
FREEMAN THOMAS, Esq., } *Secretaries*.

Mr. JOHN CLAY, Junior, called and examined.

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8186. (*Lord Cobham.*) You were one of the assistant commissioners of the Duke of Richmond's Commission, were you not?—Yes.

8187. You then reported upon American agriculture, I believe?—Yes.

8188. Will you state what means you have of judging of the state of agriculture in America at the present moment?—Well, for the last 12 years I have been very actively engaged in the cattle business. First in the range business; I commenced active range business in the year 1881, and I have continued that since. My largest business is in connexion with cattle in the Chicago stockyards, and Omaha; and loaning money upon mortgage upon farms; reporting upon loans for English and American clients; and that gives me a good general knowledge of agriculture in the Western States. I do not go into the Eastern or Southern States at all, except as far as I go into the Texan cattle business.

8189. You are more familiar with the live stock trade, but you can speak generally as to the position of agriculture, and particularly as to the position of the wheat grower?—I am intimately connected with Indian corn growing, and also indirectly with the wheat-growing industry.

Wheat growing in America.

8190. As to the wheat-growing industry in America, what have you to say?—We find the wheat-growing industry in a very depressed condition. It has never been in such a condition since I can remember, and I have been going to America for 20 years. In the Dakotas, where the largest portion of wheat has been growing, it is perfectly impossible to grow it at the price now.

8191. It is entirely a matter of price, I presume?—It is entirely a matter of price. I find, from personal contact with many of the men who are loaning money up there, that it is impossible to get the principal or interest upon the mortgages on farms. That is a very bad sign, because a man will almost do anything rather than let go his farm. I am speaking of the wheat-growing farms.

8192. Does that apply to all the States that supply wheat to the British markets?—No, it does not, because in a great number of States you have mixed farming. For instance, in the corn-growing, the maize-growing States, the farmers are well off at the present moment, comparatively well off, because they have had mixed agriculture.

8193. Will you specify which States are affected?—The States affected very severely are the Dakota's—North and South Dakota—and Northern Minnesota. Those are the wheat-growing States in our country, where they grow nothing but wheat alone.

8194. That is not a country of mixed cultivation?—No, because they cannot grow corn, and they have not got to the length that they can graze. The keeping of cattle up there is exceedingly difficult on account of the hard winter, and the result is that it is merely, to a large extent, a one crop country.

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8195. With regard to the States that you have mentioned, what should you say is the prospect before them?—Well, it is very bad. It is so bad that emigration is not only stopped going in there, but it is flowing the other way. You will find that, instead of emigration going into those States, that the labouring classes, those who can get away, the floating population, are leaving it.

Labour.

8196. Is the labour question becoming a serious one?—No, because there has been rather more labour than they needed up there, owing to the great reduction in the amount of wheat planted. You can easily understand that in a country like Dakota, there is a mixed population which has gone up there. They have no ties, and they float about. The population that have ties and houses cannot get away; they have their all invested, and they have to send all their wheat—it does not matter what the price is, because it is the only thing they have to sell.

8197. Do you think that the low cost of production in those States enables them to sell at a profit?—The wheat cannot be produced at the price.

Cost of production.

8198. Can the cost of production be further reduced?—I do not see how it can. You take wheat just now, 35 cents on the railroad at Dakota, and you grow 15 bushels of wheat at 35 cents; it comes to somewhere about 1*l.* an acre, and after that there is the hauling of it to the road. You can never produce an acre of wheat for a sovereign, or five dollars.

Reduction of freights.

8199. As to freights, do you see any prospect of their being further reduced?—Well, we thought in the Richmond Commission, when we reported, they would not be much further reduced, but we have been mistaken, and we do not know what the American railroads will do, more especially those running through the wheat district; two or three of them are in the hands of receivers. There is the Union Pacific, and then the Northern Pacific, which is distinctly a wheat railroad. It is in the hands of a receiver just now. It depends upon the receiver. He can make what rates he likes, because he has no interest on bonds to pay, and has only got his working expenses to meet.

8200. What do you consider is likely to be the case as regards competition with the British farmer from those parts of the world?—My own idea is that the railroads will get re-organised, and that they will have stiffer rates in the next few years. These railroads are not going to do business for nothing, and there will be stiffer rates in the way of transportation on the inland railroads. But we have our ocean way. I do not think it will be any higher; it will be very likely less, and the tendency has been that way for a number of years.

Continuance of competition.

8201. Do you think that the wheat grower in the immediate future will be in a position to continue his competition in our markets?—It may go on for a year or two, but it is merely drawing the blood out of these men. They cannot go on for all time. Of course we can produce wheat very cheap, because we have such advantages in a new country like America.

Mortgages on land.

8202. What happens to the land when it falls into the hands of the mortgagees?—It generally lies fallow; they find it impossible to do anything. If you get a farm thrown upon your hands you cannot rent it, you cannot sell it, and it just lies there.

8203. Is there a considerable extent of land in the Western States in that condition?—A very large amount of it has been going into that condition. I have not got the exact statistics, but I find that the amount of new land which has been going into cultivation in these States is practically stopped; in fact, it has been declining the last year. That is a sign, of course, that wheat growing is not paying.

Exhaustion of soil by wheat.

8204. Does wheat growing show signs of exhausting the land that has been long under cultivation?—Yes, the wheat growing has been gradually going westward, but it has pretty nearly stopped and got to the absolute limit.

8205. Has it been found that the land under wheat cultivation for a considerable time has exhausted the land, and do the cultivators manure the land?—No, not at all. The State of Illinois, which was a great wheat-growing State, has been turned into grazing. It grows blue grass, in which it remains for several years, then it is ploughed and put down to corn a few years, and it keeps up the fertility of the soil; but in these northern States it is not likely that that can be done, because the keeping of cattle in winter costs a great deal of money, whereas in Illinois the cattle run out all the winter.

Continuance of competition.

8206. The general effect of your evidence on this head is that you consider that the present competition with the British farmer can only be maintained with great difficulty by the Western States?—We cannot maintain it at present prices.

8207. Still we get the wheat?—We will get it for two or three years, but they will have gradually to go to the wall by growing wheat at that price.

Indian corn growing.

8208. And as to the Indian corn grower, what will he do?—Well, the Indian corn grower comes in indirectly into competition with the British farmer in this way: that the amount of Indian corn that is exported to this country is very small, comparatively speaking; we probably produce about 2,000,000,000 bushels of Indian corn, and we only export somewhere about 7 per cent. in the raw material. Where we compete with the British farmer is in sending in the sheep, the beef, and, more especially, pork. All our beef and pork is raised upon Indian corn and grass, but Indian corn is the mainstay. It comes indirectly over here, in opposition to the British farmer. A little of it comes in the shape of beef, but the great amount of it in the shape of lard and pork and bacon, and so on.

8209. That is a prosperous industry at the present moment?—Yes, it is a prosperous industry. It depends very much upon the price of cattle. Of course the price of cattle is low just now, but hogs are high, and during the last 12 or 14 years we have had very fair prices for both cattle and hogs. I have got the statistics, showing for the last 16 years the prices, and the general average has been good, so that our farmers in the Western States, in the corn States, and in the grass-growing States could make a fair living, and the result is that they are in a prosperous way.

8210. Is that a different class of soil from the wheat-growing soil?—Not necessarily a different class of soil, but it takes a certain temperature. You cannot grow it in a cold climate; it needs a warm climate, it needs to be in the corn belt. Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, and Kansas are the great corn States.

8211. Where it can be suitably grown has it taken the place of wheat?—Almost entirely. In Illinois it has driven wheat practically out. In Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri, those five great States, it has practically driven wheat out. There is still a great deal of wheat growing, but the staple industry is corn growing.

Exports of American cattle.

8212. Shall we have more and more meat sent to this country raised upon Indian corn?—I do not think we are going to have a great deal more; in fact, the statistics show rather a decline this year. Our export of cattle has rather declined this year.

8213. Is that owing to the price obtained here?—It is the price obtained here, and there has been a strong demand at home for the first six months of last year. Trade was good. Within the last six months we have had very bad trade.

Consumption of wheat.

8214. Does the home consumption of wheat rise with the population or faster than the population?—No, I would not like to say that, because you have got to look at what prices are and supply and demand. It varies a great deal. Sometimes if we have good trade over here, a little more will come this way, and if we have good times, and the labouring classes are well employed, we consume more there. Of course for a few years it has increased very rapidly, but for the last two years the exports have been standing still.

8215. The financial position of the farmer you have already dealt with?—To a certain extent. In the wheat States the financial condition is bad, and in the corn States it is good.

Interest on mortgage.

8216. What interest do you say the wheat-growing farmer has to pay for borrowed capital?—Well, the mortgages in that country, the best of them, are about 8 per cent. upon the farms.

8217. And what would be the current rate?—The current rate upon those farm mortgages is about 8 per cent., and probably a commission, which would raise it to 9 per cent.

8218. It has fallen considerably, I presume, within the last 20 years?—Originally it would be 10 and 12 per cent. When I went first to Illinois farm mortgages would be done at 10 per cent., that is 20 years ago, and now they are done at 6 per cent.

8219. Is the payment of interest the main burden on the shoulders of the farmer in the Western States?—No, that is not his main burden. Of course it is probably the principal burden, but his main burden is, of course, getting his implements and machinery. His land practically costs him nothing.

8220. His operations are practically on borrowed capital?—Nearly so. Then, of course, the rate is usurious. The rate of interest would be from 8 to 9 per cent. on a mortgage, but he would have to pay heavy interest to the local banker when he bought a horse or paid his taxes. The rate would run from 15 to 24 per cent. per annum.

8221. The cost of the necessaries of life generally are high in the United States; is not that so?—Wheat, of course, he has. Flour is very cheap, and meat, as a rule, is very cheap. Where the expense comes in is in clothing, &c.

8222. Apart from the provisions of the soil?—Yes, it is wonderful how little those people will do with.

Life of American farmers.

8223. Their life is a hard one, I have been given to understand?—Exceedingly. They are poorly housed, very poorly housed, and they are poorly clad, and they generally live upon what they cannot sell.

8224. And the work is very hard?—Yes, in the summer time. In the winter time there is very little work.

8225. And you say that the life of the American farmer is considerably harder than the life of a farmer here?—It is a much harder life than that of the agricultural labourer. You cannot compare him with a farmer here. I am talking of the western districts. If you take Illinois and the eastern districts, the farmers compare somewhat with the farmers in this country, but I am talking of the western agriculturists who are raising wheat; their lot does not compare with the agricultural labourer here.

8226. They have the responsibility of supervising their farms, and at the same time they have to work very hard with their hands?—It is mostly done by themselves. It is only a few men who hire any labourers in those farming districts. Every farmer does his own work.

8227. Are the women well employed?—The women do not work, as a rule, on the farm, except you take Swedes, Norwegians, and Germans. The first generation of them work on the farm, but the second generation stop; they do not work any more upon the farm.

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"Ranche and range."

8228. As to "ranche and range," could you explain what are the systems represented by those words?—Well, "ranche" and "range" practically mean the same thing. The ranche is more enclosed. They are large enclosures, and the range is an open range, but they are practically the same in management. Now the record of them during the last 10 years has been disastrous. There has been a great deal of money lost upon them, and they have been continually declining. The open range business especially has been declining wonderfully, and we do not draw anything like the number of cattle from those regions that we used to do. On the other hand, the agricultural parts of the country have increased in cattle, so that the one has off-set the other, but the range business has been not only unprofitable, but very disastrous in many cases.

8229. That is entirely distinct from the industry of feeding cattle?—Yes, we draw a great portion of our feeding cattle from the range districts. Very few are able to feed them good enough to grow into fat cattle, and probably 30 per cent. of the range cattle are drafted on to the Indian corn farms and fed. This year they were drafted at probably 3 cents per pound upon the farm, live weight, and they are finished off.

8230. Do you get your supply of lean stock from the ranches?—Yes, very largely.

Cattle breeding in United States.

8231. Is cattle breeding practised on the farms now?—To a great extent.

8232. Then are there many ranges, which were previously occupied, abandoned?—A great number.

8233. And they have gone back into open prairie?—Yes, into open prairie. Well the cattle have disappeared, and some of the ranges have been divided up into pastures, and used agriculturally to a great extent.

8234. What will the future of those lands be? Will they be taken up for agricultural purposes?—They are grazing lands. West of a certain point—the 100th meridian—they are practically grazing lands.

8235. Are they suitable for enclosed farms?—Yes, for large enclosures; they will not do for 80 acre, or 160 acre farms, but probably from 5,000 to 20,000 acres and more.

System of Chicago Cattle Market.

8236. You are well acquainted with the chief western markets, and especially with the Chicago Market, are you not?—My firm operates in Chicago, Omaha, and Kansas City; those are the three great central markets.

8237. I shall be glad to have your evidence as to the system in vogue in these markets?—Would you like me to go from the very beginning to the end of it.

8238. Yes?—The first thing is the cattle coming by rail. We will take Chicago Market. It is a big square block of land, about 640 acres in extent, just a mile square; probably more than half of it is divided off into pens, and the railway roads are round about it, encircling it. The result is, that the cattle are concentrated, and come in from the different railroads by a branch line, by a belt road as it were, and are unloaded right into the yards. When they get there the cattle are fed and watered. Most of them arrive at 4 o'clock in the morning until 9 o'clock. We always try to have our cattle arrive at 6 o'clock in the morning, but of course, receiving 10,000 and 15,000, and up to sometimes as many as 32,000 a day, you cannot bring the thing at the proper moment, but the intention is, to be there from 4 o'clock till 9 o'clock.

8239. When does the market begin?—From 8 to 9 o'clock, and goes on till 3 o'clock. All our cattle are sold privately. There is no auctioneering; it is all done by private bargain, either sold per cwt. or per pound. We all work in decimals. The price is fixed according to the quality of the cattle, and the rest of the work is done by the weighing machines. We have no selling by the slump. The whole thing is done by weight. Immediately the cattle are sold they are taken out of the pen, driven to the weighbridge, and officially weighed there by men appointed by the Stock Yards Company, who are independent, of course, of both the buyer and seller. Their ticket is official, and that is taken in to the commission man, who counts it up, and it is handed around to the buyers, and he issues his cheque; in fact, to simplify business, no cheques go at all. This official ticket is merely signed by the buyer, and we hand it in to the bank, and the amount is transferred from the buyer's account to our account, and then, of course, we send out our money to the farmer who consigns the stock, or whoever he may be. It goes on every day. Our receipts at Chicago Yard ——

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8240. Each beast is weighed?—No; for instance, we very seldom sell less than 20 cattle a car load, and they run up as high as 300 cattle at a time. Our weighbridges can weigh 100,000 lbs. at a time. That is practically 20 tons at a time, so that you can put 40 cattle on to the weighbridge and weigh them; and say 1,500 lbs. apiece, that is 60,000 lbs. at one time.

Sale by live weight.

8241. A system of selling by live weight is absolutely necessary then?—Of course you can weigh one animal just as well as 50.

8242. (*Captain Thomas.*) Would they be of the same quality?—Take 20 good bullocks; they are generally the same weight. We receive a large amount of butcher's stuff, that is, cows, and heifers, and bulls. We often get a load, and our salesmen classify them; probably five of them of one kind, 10 of another, and three of another. These are weighed separately, but generally the smallest draft is 20 head, and you can weigh from one up to 50 at a time upon these weighbridges.

Exports of live cattle and of beef.

8243. (*Lord Cobham.*) Is the bulk of the cattle sold at these great markets for exportation?—No, there is a very small proportion sold for exportation. In the year 1893 we received 3,143,000 cattle at Chicago. That is a decrease of nearly 400,000 from the year before. 70 per cent. of those cattle were killed in Chicago and 30 per cent. were shipped forward. Those cattle were shipped forward, going to New York, and Pittsburg, and Boston, and the Eastern States, and a certain proportion come here, exported here alive. But gradually we are drifting into the exporting of beef in the carcase. A very large amount of our beef is sent from Chicago into New York and Boston in the carcase.

8244. It will not prejudicially affect the English farmer if the future exportation takes the form of dead meat?—No; by sending them alive the offal can be utilised, whereas by sending the dead meat we utilise the offal at home. The offal is rather more valuable here.

8245. (*Lord Vernon.*) Of this 70 per cent., a large per-centage is exported in tins?—A great deal of it comes in the tin, and, of course, it is sent everywhere in this shape.

8246. When you say that it is killed at Chicago, it does not necessarily follow that it is consumed in the country, does it?—No; but of that meat over 55 per cent. will be consumed in the country. Of course, we tin a great deal, and we use a great deal of tinned meat at home.

8247. (*Lord Cobham.*) But you feel quite confident that the abandonment of live stock transit will not materially affect the export trade?—Not the slightest. It would for a time, of course, but it would gradually drift into dead meat.

8248. Are you speaking of pigs as well as cattle?—Pigs are not sent alive, but sent in the shape of dead meat. They are all sent as dead meat. No live pigs are sent across the ocean.

8249. Your firm takes in hog products as well as cattle?—Yes. We do not deal in the product, we deal in the raw material; after I sell these cattle and hogs, and collect the money, I am through with it.

Sale by live weight.

8250. Have you a strong opinion that the system of selling by live weight in this country would be a very great advantage to the farmer?—It seems to me that it would. There is just this in it, the farmer is probably valuing according to weight his cattle three or four times a year, and the butcher is at it every day, 300 days in the year. We see that exemplified in Chicago. You take a farmer coming in and ask him to guess the weight of the cattle; but he will be a long way out, whereas the man who is dealing with the weight of cattle will come within 10 or 15 pounds of the weight of the bullock.

8251. Have you anything to add with regard to the marketing system in the Western States?—I think not; I think I have covered the whole thing, except with any questions that may arise on further examining me.

Prices of cattle 1878-93.

8252. With regard to the prices during the last 10 years, have they been such as to encourage the production of meat on a large scale in the Western States?—I will give you the prices for the last 16 years to show how evenly they have run. This is the average quotation of bullocks weighing from 1,200 to 1,500 lbs. In 1893, $5 a cwt. Then I miss 1892, my clerk has missed out the year, but in 1891 it is $4·35, that is 65 cents a cwt. less. Then in 1890, $4·05; then in 1889, $4·05; 1888, $4·35; 1887, $4·40; 1886, $5; 1885, $5·50; 1884, $6·05—$2 a cwt. higher than it was in 1889 and 1890. In 1883 it was $5·35, and 1882, $5·60; 1881, $4·35; 1880, $4·85; 1879, $4·35; 1878, $4·55. These ran, practically speaking, from $4 the cwt. to $6·05. Then, of course, in 1884 we had it very high, but the general average has run very steady, and at the present moment those cattle are worth about $4·25. The average price for the 16 years is $5·12½.

8253. Have you any particular reason to give for the large rise in 1884?—Well, trade in America was exceedingly good, and there was a small corn crop, which always affects the price of cattle with us. For instance, in 1888 and 1891, during those summers, we had cattle very high, and that came about not from fewer cattle, but there were a great number less fed, and the price of corn was so high that the farmers carried their lean cattle over to another year rather than sell. In 1884, 1888, and 1891 we had high prices.

8254. Do you consider that now the home demand is the chief factor in the regulation of the price?—Very much so, and it is becoming daily more so.

Profits in cattle trade.

8255. And as to the profits that accrue in this trade, do you consider that they are fairly constant?—Of course this year farmers are not having a good time of it because cattle are low, but the general average has been good, and we are quite able to send across cattle at something like the price we have been getting during the last three or four years.

Dressed beef trade.

8256. The dressed beef trade has very much increased, has it not?—Very much so, very materially.

8257. Have you some figures to give us?—I was going to say that during the last 30 years the Stock Yards Company have received somewhere about 43,000,000 cattle. The shipments only appear to have been 20,000,000 of cattle, which is nearly half, but during the last year there has been scarcely 30 per cent. shipped, so that that shows the dressed beef has increased very wonderfully. I think I am right in saying that less than 30 per cent. has been shipped.

8258. Is that owing to the restrictions on this side of the water, or to the natural course of the trade in dressed beef?—The restrictions have had a certain effect, but the natural course of trade is towards dressed beef. It has been growing as a western business. It began in New York, and now it is in Chicago, Kansas City, and Omaha.

8259. (*Lord Vernon.*) Does that include store cattle?—We do not send any store cattle from America; they do send cattle from Canada.

Disposal of offal.

8260. (*Lord Cobham.*) What is the reason of their keeping more offal in the country than they did 20 or 30 years ago?—They have wonderful means of taking advantage of the offal of a bullock. Take Mr. Armour's great establishment, where they kill 3,000 to 5,000 cattle in a day. He makes the blood into manure, he uses up the bones, grinds them up into manure and sends them to the Southern States; he sends his hides to a tannery, and all the other parts that he cannot use he sends to his glue factory, and utilizes everything within himself and classifies it, and makes the most he can of it.

8261. He can do it with greater advantage than we can in this country?—That is where the dressed beef men have made their money; they have made their profits out of what they have saved, out of the offal. I may point out that the ordinary butcher in this country or in our country cannot compete against him, because you take a butcher in the country districts in the States: he kills probably five or six bullocks a week, and all the blood and offal goes away. He has to keep a man to kill those five or six bullocks, whereas the dressed beef man has everything classified, and can get his work done very cheaply. The result is that there is a saving in the labour bill, and that is an immense consideration, and consequently the dressed beef trade is sure to increase.

8262. From that cause alone, if from no other?—Yes.

Disease amongst American stock.

8263. As to the prevalence of disease amongst live stock in America, is there more of it than in this country?—We have practically, at the present moment, no disease at all, except local disease. We have Texas fever, but that does not reach cattle that come here at all. As far as the export of cattle is concerned we have no disease. Pleuro-pneumonia is extinct at the present moment.

8264. Is that owing to careful State supervision?—The late General Rusk, who was Minister of Agriculture, took a very strong hand to put it down, and in the Western States we have none at all, but in the Eastern States, in the dairy districts, there may be a little, but practically speaking we are free from disease except the local diseases.

8265. Are you speaking of Canada at the present moment?—I am not talking of Canada at all.

Decline in quality of beef.

8266. Then as to the quality of the beef and mutton, what do you say?—Well, the quality of beef has been rather on the decline.

8267. What is that owing to?—The last two or three years we have had very low prices, and there has been no buying of thoroughbred bulls. Our fine stock trade is practically extinct for the present moment, as far as making any money out of them is concerned. I have a small herd of shorthorns, and I have turned them into steers, because there is no demand for the fine cattle at the present moment. The consequence is that the cattle are getting deteriorated. You can only keep up a herd of cattle by infusing blood into it.

8268. Inferior stock is being bred?—Yes, and the general average within the last two years shows a great decline, and it is likely to decline.

8269. What is the importation of pedigree cattle?—There is no importation at all, and the price of our pedigree cattle is very little above the others.

8270. It does not pay to keep pedigree cattle, then?—No, it is in a deplorable condition. The trade is completely stagnant. In sheep it is otherwise.

8271. If the quality of the meat is being rapidly affected, some remedy must be found?—Well, of course our people will have to get back to using thoroughbred bulls.

8272. But you said the present quality of the beef exported is decidedly inferior?—I would not like to say that there has been a change in the quality of the beef that is exported, and that it is worse, but I may say that the general quality of cattle that we receive at Chicago is not as good as it was two years ago.

8273. That must affect the quality of the meat?—We pick out the best. A certain top kind of cattle is exported here, and our range cattle are decreasing very rapidly in quality, because men have not had the money to put into the bulls to put them upon the range.

Mutton exports.

8274. Then as to the export of mutton, what do you say?—That scarcely figures at all. We have no mutton to export to speak of, but our sheep are improving very rapidly.

8275. Do you think there will ever be a substantial export of mutton?—I think not. We are not a mutton raising people.

American store cattle

8276. As to the store cattle produced in America, what evidence have you to give?—I put that in because there is a great question here about sending stores over here from the States. Of course, in Canada, they would send quite a number, but in the States I have always been of opinion that we have no cattle to spare. We have got a place for all our best stores at home, and I do not think there ever will be any great trade between this country and America in connexion with store cattle, as more especially during the past few years we have been inclining to go back in quality.

8277. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Did you say that we shall not be able to get any store cattle from the States, because you will not be able to supply them?—Because we need them there ourselves. We have got plenty of second class cattle to send over, but our good quality of feeders we need as feeders at home.

American competition in meat trade.

8278. (*Lord Cobham.*) The general effect of your evidence as to the meat trade across the ocean is that the British farmer need not fear any increased competition, at all events?—I do not think he will need to fear it. My own idea is that he will not. But we in America have got to fear ourselves the competition of Australia and South America and those other places.

8279. Do you feel that already?—We feel that already; not that they will sell meat to us, but they are sending meat and might cut below us here.

8280. There is as yet no importation into America?—No; we produce considerably more than we can use, of course; but then, when we come to compete in this market we find it very hard to compete against those other countries.

Diminishing area of virgin soil.

8281. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) May I gather that the cultivation of the land in the States is getting daily more expensive, that is to say, that you cannot produce as cheaply as you did on the virgin soil years ago?—We do not have the amount of virgin soil to work upon.

8282. One witness told us that as the land became exhausted it would be necessary, in order to produce the same quantity per acre in a grain crop, to use manures?—Yes. Of course we have a great deal of land to break, but nothing like the amount we had 10 years ago.

Manures.

8283. You have told us that in the cattle yards of Chicago all the bones and blood manure is sold. Is there a demand for it?—Nearly the whole of it goes into the cotton States; nearly all of it. We are not using any manures at all in the North Western States.

8284. It does not go on to the agricultural land?—Not on to the agricultural land; not in connexion with live stock and wheat growing, but in the cotton States; and a great deal of it is sent to Louisiana, where they grow sugar. Mr. Armour's manure goes south.

8285. It does not go to agricultural land at all, does it?—It does not go on to the agricultural land.

8286. Not on to the wheat growing lands?—Not at all.

8287. But I understand you to say that there were tracts of country which are now being formed into farms where part is arable and part is pasture land?—Of course they manure that land by the amount of corn upon it. The corn is put out the same as oil cake here, and that goes into the soil.

8288. And that fertilises the soil?—That keeps up the fertility of the soil.

8289. And those farms are not laid out with buildings for cattle?—Not to any large extent. The most of them have only a very limited accommodation in that way.

8290. Therefore there is not much money laid out in buildings by the owner?—No.

Increase in sheep.

8291. Did I understand you that the number of sheep was not increasing?—It is slightly increasing. But we do not take it very much into account. Most of the sheep over there have been produced for their wool. The great bulk of them have been wool producing sheep; for instance, Merinoes, and they do not count for selling mutton.

8292. They are no good as mutton, I suppose?—So poor is our mutton that a great deal of mutton is exported from here to New York—the finer cuts.

Horse breeding.

8293. I do not think you have told us whether on those ranches horse breeding is increasing or decreasing?—I would rather say decreasing. I am not quite competent to speak of it, for I have not been in it; but it is not a profitable business at the present moment.

8294. The same cause is operating there as is operating with cattle; that is, that good stallions are not being imported into your country now as they used to be?—During the last three or four years we had a large importation of heavy stallions, such as the French Normans, the German stallions, and Clydesdales, and Shires, and so on. That, of course, has stopped during the last year.

8295. And they prefer a heavier horse?—The heavier horses have been the most profitable breed. We have only the light horse with us, and we have a good demand in the States for heavy horses.

American demand for pedigree cattle.

8296. As regards the pedigree cattle, do you think if times get better in America that there would be a demand for pedigree shorthorn or other breeds?—We have enough to supply our demand. There will be a demand at certain times for a few bulls, or a few special breeds of pedigree cattle, but as a rule we are pretty well supplied ourselves with them.

8297. You yourself keep a small herd of pedigree cattle, and I suppose you hope to be able to get better prices in a few years?—I hope so.

8298. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) I think you said in the Western States the amount of land cultivated with wheat is increasing?—I said it was decreasing.

8299. I did not understand that?—The wheat production from the whole of the country is just now stationary.

Wheat area stationary in United States.

8300. It is not increasing?—No, it is just about stationary.

"Ranche and range."

8301. You said that the ranche and the range is not paying, but you did not say why?—A great deal of the trouble has come from climatic reasons. We have had a great number of bad winters, and gradually our range has been encroached upon by settlers coming in and fencing up the best part of the range, and leaving the rest open. The death rate has been very heavy, and the prices of our cattle, as they did not get fat, has been low. In Montana the industry has been fairly profitable, but in other parts it has been unprofitable. In Montana they have an open range.

8302. Then the reason it is not paying is principally on account of the climate?—Very much so.

Cost of wheat growing.

8303. (*Mr. Giffen.*) At 35 cents per bushel I think you said wheat growing does not pay in Dakota and Minnesota. How much is that below the price that it would take to pay to grow wheat?—That is a question which I would not like to answer, because I have been so little in the wheat business, in fact I have not studied it for the last five or six years; but you can calculate for yourself; it is impossible it can be raised at that price. Now where the limit would come would depend very much upon the freight, upon the investment in land, and upon the price of labour at a certain time.

8304. Can you tell us the cost of freight for wheat from Dakota?—I cannot answer that question; I am not quite prepared upon it; but it would be very easily seen; I suppose 8 bushels of wheat would be worth 30*s.* a quarter, and 8 bushels at 35 cents is worth about 12*s.*

8305. And the difference is about 18*s.*?—15*s.* to 18*s.* to bring them. Of course the heavy end of the freight is bringing it to the water at Duluth.

8306. (*Lord Vernon.*) Mr. Pell gave it as 18*s.*; that is from the farm to Liverpool?—It will be less now considerably.

8307. (*Mr. Giffen.*) But that does not pay the producer?—It is simply impossible that a man can raise an acre of wheat for a sovereign.

8308. That is the question that I was about to put to you. Would 50 cents a bushel pay the producer there?—I do not believe it would. They were getting 60 cents last year, and still they could not pay up on their mortgages, and every man that I find coming down from there is poverty stricken.

8309. 35 to 36 cents is 1*s.* 6*d.* per bushel?—Yes.

8310. Then the wheat land is producing wheat at Dakota which is being sold at 8*s.* per quarter less than you could produce it at?—I am merely talking of it generally.

8311. That is the tendency of your evidence as to the difference in the margin?—Yes; I know that wheat cannot be produced at present prices. They will have to stop.

Price of beef at Chicago.

8312. You have told us that there has been a falling off in the quality of the meat sold in the Chicago market in the last two years. Has that made much difference in the price?—No, because we grade up. It has given us a larger number of inferior cattle to handle. There will be a certain number of good cattle.

8313. I am speaking of the average price that you quoted, 75 cents. a cwt.?—I quoted those as to the general quality. We grade up cattle in the same way as wheat. We talk about a 1,400 lbs. to 1,500 lbs. bullock amongst ourselves; and we know exactly what that is.

8314. The quotation was for the same quality of meat all the way through?—Yes.

Sale by live weight.

8315. (*Mr. Clay.*) With regard to the selling by live weight, is not that nearly universal in America?—It is universal at the central markets.

8316. There is no authority from Washington to make it compulsory?—No, it is merely use and custom.

8317. The beef seller and the beef buyer are satisfied that it is the best mode?—It is universal; there was never any other way of doing it.

8318. And you consider that if the same line of selling cattle were adopted here, it would be beneficial to the farmer?—It would put him upon a much better basis, because he would know what he was doing.

8319. It would benefit the better quality rather than the lower grades?—It would benefit all, because the man with a good quality would be a little better off, and the man with bad quality would not be so well off.

8320. It would resolve itself into this, that it would put the farmer on equal terms with the butcher?—The farmer fixes the weight of his cattle four or five times in the year, and the butcher 300 days in the year.

8321. And the farmer would be paid on the exact weight of the animal?—He would get exactly the weight.

8322. And the difference in price per stone or per pound, as you have it in America, would only be regulated by the difference in quality?—Exactly.

Straw.

8323. (*Mr. Little.*) Has the straw in the wheat-growing districts any value?—It has no value.

8324. It is not, as in England, a help to make up for the low prices?—In the wheat-growing districts it is generally burnt. In the districts where we have mixed farming it is used to a great extent.

8325. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I think you described Dakota and Minnesota as one crop countries?—Yes; northern Minnesota and Dakota are practically one crop countries.

8326. Do I understand you to say that where it is possible for people who are now cultivating the land to leave, they are doing so?—A great number of people are leaving.

8327. But you say that those who have families are obliged to stay?—Yes; the floating population get away first, but the people with homes and families have got to stay.

8328. Do you anticipate that in the course of a few years they too will be gone?—I do not think that they will all go, but I do not think any large emigration, or any at all, would go to those places. We find that the amount of wheat growing there has been decreasing.

8329. They will have to continue to grow wheat whatever the price?—These people who are left will naturally have to keep on doing what they can, because this is the only thing they can get any cash out of.

Fall in price of wheat.

8330. What do you attribute this great fall in the price of wheat to?—In America we think that it comes from the competition with other countries; from India and Russia. We are standing still as a wheat producing people at the present time, and we find that the outside competition is cutting under us.

8331. It is some of the most fertile land in the world, is it not?—Yes.

8332. It is not heavily taxed, is it?—No.

8333. The freights are low?—Very low.

8334. How do you account for the fact that Russian wheat is able to undersell them?—Because they have a much lower labour bill than we have; for in India, as I understand it (I am not thoroughly read up in it) their labour is very much cheaper than ours.

8335. And that, as far as you know, is the main cause of your difficulty?—That is how we look at it.

8336. You talk about the railway roads being in the hands of receivers. At the present moment there are a vast number of railway roads in the United States in that condition, are there not?—I was referring to the receivers in the Santa Fè, in the Union Pacific, and the Northern Pacific Railways, which haul a great deal of wheat, more especially the last two railroads.

Freights.

8337. That is a thing that will right itself, and you may look forward to a rise in freights rather than otherwise, I suppose?—Yes, because those railroads will have to re-organise. It will make the wheat-growing a little higher in those districts.

8338. You state that when the land was exhausted that the habit in the more southern districts was to turn it into grass for two or three years?—Yes.

8339. And that it recovered?—You know that land going into grass, and more especially having stock put upon it, will get its fertility back.

Housing of American cattle.

8340. But that is impossible on account of the winter?—It is not impossible, but they could not raise them to house against the man in the Southern States, who does not house them at all.

8341. They must be housed; they cannot live as the buffalo does?—They could live, with very generous feeding, of course. I have seen an old cow subsist behind a haystack in Canada, but it is a very expensive system.

Decline of wheat growing.

8342. Then the general result of your experience is that wheat competition with this country, in these districts at all events, at present prices, sooner or later will cease?—It will cease to a great extent; it cannot help it.

8343. Until what time?—You will find within the next two or three years, at present prices, we will have to stop growing wheat up there; they could not go ahead.

"Ranche and range."

8344. You stated that the ranches had fallen off very much, and that the reason for that was that the land was not good enough. Do I understand you rightly to say that that is generally due to the production of cattle on the ranches?—I think you mistake me; what I said was this, that a great number of the ranges have been so cut up that, of course, cattle had no longer free range upon them, and that whenever you stop cattle from the natural range they do not die, but they fall off, and are worth much less than in an open range.

8345. Is that from not having sufficient extent to range over?—Exactly.

Pleuro-pneumonia.

8346. With regard to pleuro-pneumonia, you said that was extinct now in the United States; are you aware that information to that effect has been given to us on more than one occasion from the United States Government, and that outbreaks of that disease have occurred subsequently?—Well, I differ with the home people upon that question.

8347. Are you aware that there have been undoubted cases of pleuro-pneumonia landed in this country?—I doubt very much that it is pleuro-pneumonia. We undoubtedly deny it by our experts.

8348. I know that a great difference exists between American veterinary surgeons and the experts in this country, but you are aware of the fact that the experts in this country have declared that there have been repeated cases of pleuro-pneumonia brought from America?—During the last six months I have not seen cases reported.

8349. I think that this is within a less period than that?—I say that, practically speaking, we have no pleuro-pneumonia; I do not believe we have any. I take a great interest in that. I was one of the men, being heavily interested in live stock, that got this matter eradicated. I have a great deal to do with the department of animal industry there, and I have considerable faith in our veterinary department, many of them having come from this side. You take Dr. McEachran, the Canadian veterinarian, he does not believe in it. I have seen no disease there, and I have great faith in him, because he is a Canadian. And you take a great number of others. I am not going to say that you have not good veterinary surgeons. I have seen a great many of the lungs of those animals said to have been affected with pleuro-pneumonia, but, as far as I saw them, I do not believe it. Practically speaking, we have none. We have some in the dairy towns; you always have in dairies more or less of lung disease floating about.

8350. What do you call lung disease, pleuro-pneumonia?—No; you have an immense amount of tuberculosis.

8351. But I understand in the dairy towns there may be pleuro-pneumonia still in existence?—There might be.

8352. To that extent you qualify that statement of yours that the disease is extinct?—Practically it is extinct.

8353. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) In the Western States?—I say it is practically extinct in the Eastern States. In the Western States we have none.

8354. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You said that Canada was entirely free from disease?—Yes.

8355. Notwithstanding that, I think the year before last cargoes were landed from Canada into Scotland, which undoubtedly re-introduced pleuro-pneumonia and spread it over very large districts of the country?—Yes.

Export of cattle from

8356. How do you account for it getting to Canada, do you suppose it went from the United States?—No, United States to Canada.

because there is no exportation from the United States to Canada. It may have gone in from thoroughbred cattle from here, but there is no export of cattle from the States to Canada; the whole drift is from the west to the east with us.

8357. Is there no risk of cattle being smuggled over the frontier line between the two countries?—It would do no good.

8358. Does it not occur?—The Canadians would rather send to us.

8359. Is there no object in the animals crossing from the United States to Canada?—There might be an object in sending a bull of a high grade for instance, but still it would scarcely occur.

8360. You would repudiate the idea that Canada, which was free from this disease as far as anybody knows, is so affected by animals from the United States?—Practically I do not see how it could occur, because we know every animal that is exported from the United States to Canada, and it is practically nothing.

United States store cattle and restrictions on imports.

8361. Then you told us that the United States would have no surplus cattle, in your opinion, in the course of a very short time that they could send us as stores?—Exactly.

8362. If that is the case now, what has been the object of the Government of the United States in pressing us earnestly and very repeatedly for the removal of the restrictions which prevent live cattle coming into the interior of this country?—As I said, I entirely disagree with that idea; I do not believe it. I believe that we can send all the product that we have to send in the shape of dressed beef. I do not think that it would make a bit of difference.

8363. So that the removal of restrictions pressed upon us by the United States would be of no use to the United States?—None to the United States, but the removal of the restrictions would be of great importance to Canada. As far as the United States are concerned, that is my individual opinion. Of course, it is not shared by the vast population there, but I am giving my personal opinion. I do not think that it would make one whit of difference with us, and, as a large holder of stock, I do not care as long as you allow us to send our dressed beef over here.

8364. (*Mr. Lambert.*) With regard to the system of killing and dressing cattle, do you think the system of killing and dressing cattle that is in vogue in America could be applied in this country?—I do not see why you should not; you have it at Deptford and other places.

Disposal of offal.

8365. I mean as to the disposal of the offal?—There is nothing to hinder it.

8366. Do you think that it would be beneficial if such a system could be inaugurated that farmers could all combine together, and send their stock to a central depôt to have them slaughtered, so that the offal and such things could be utilised?—So far as the co-operation of the farmers is concerned, I do not think it could be done, but individuals or companies might rise up and do it.

Deterioration in quality of stock.

8367. You said that the stock had deteriorated, and that it would require pure blood to bring it up to its former condition?—Yes.

8368. But to bring in that pure blood it would increase the cost, I presume?—To a great extent; but you can buy a very good shorthorn bull with us for 10*l.*

8369. Why do they not?—We are preaching to them all the time, but they do not.

8370. So that they could better the quality of their stock there easily and cheaply?—Of course whenever the demand increases for the bulls they would go up. In the old States 25*l.* were given with us until a few years ago, and within the last two years they were bought from 8*l.* to 14*l.*

8371. Do you think that there will be a further increase of the area for the cultivation of wheat in America?—I think not.

Production of cattle and exports of beef.

8372. Will there be for the production of cattle?—Of course. When we have improved means we will produce more cattle, because we will grow more corn and hay, and we are opening up our lands; it will increase along with our population.

8373. Do you think that there would be a material increase in the exports of dressed meat to this country?—I think that the dressed beef industry and the live stock industry will rather decline.

8374. You do not anticipate that there will be any decrease in the competition in this country for beef?—I think it will just about remain stationary for some years.

8375. And you do not anticipate a large increase in the cultivated area of the United States?—Our statistics show that it is decreasing.

Average size of farms.

8376. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) What is the average size of farms which are being worked by the farmers themselves?—As you know, all our farms run from 80 acres generally up to any amount, but the general average is 160 acres that one man has.

8377. Are they their own landlords; do they own the property?—Yes, to a certain extent; but the system of renting is increasing wonderfully with us. The large blocks of land are going into the hands of capitalists.

8378. (*Viscount Cobham.*) What States are you speaking of in that connexion?—I am talking of all over the West, but, taking the older Western States, such as Illinois, there are a great number of land owners there.

8379. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Have those farmers much capital of their own?—Some of them have, but the general average of farmers do not have much capital with us.

8380. Have they increased their capital lately?—In the corn States they have, but in the wheat States they have not.

Local rates.

8381. You mentioned rates; what would farmers pay in the way of rates?—It differs, of course, in the various States, but generally we pay about 2 per cent. upon a very low valuation. Land is generally valued at about one-half of its actual value, and the rates run from 1 to 2 per cent.

8382. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is that the capital value or the annual value?—The capital value; and then it is only put at about 50 per cent., and sometimes only one-third.

8383. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Are there many farms to let in the States?—It has not become a business like it has here; but in certain districts you will find a great number of farms are held upon leases, the leases generally being annual ones.

8384. Anyone going from here would not find much difficulty in getting a farm?—No.

Rent per acre.

8385. At what rent per acre?—It differs. In Illinois you find them from 12*s.* to 20*s.* an acre, it very seldom being 20*s.* per acre. In Illinois, where there are a large number, the rents are pretty fairly established generally at 16*s.* per acre.

8386. (*Mr. Clay.*) Are not some of them made out on the share system?—Yes, but this gentleman is asking about cash rents. In many cases it is a share rent. You take a rent farm growing Indian corn, it is generally a half share and the owner supplies the seed, and that of course makes, if it is a good crop, a good thing for both of them.

Average yield of wheat, corn, and oats.

8387. What is the average yield for wheat, say, in America?—The average yield over the whole country is about 12½ bushels.

8388. And the yield of Indian corn?—About 28 bushels.

8389. And oats?—I cannot say as to oats.

8390. The oat crop in Illinois is sometimes very large, is it not?—I have seen it run up to nearly 50 bushels, but that is far above the average.

Amount of mortgages.

8391. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) What amount of mortgage would there be on a farm of 200 acres?—You take good farms in Illinois, for instance, they are worth 50 dollars an acre, at 200 acres; that would be 10,000 dollars, which is 2,000*l.*, and you could readily borrow 1,000*l.* at 6 per cent.

Root growing.

8392. (*Mr. Everett.*) The American farmers do not, as a rule, grow roots and turnips and mangolds?—It is almost unknown with us.

8393. Their cattle are kept in the winter either on the hay or corn or the natural growth of the earth?—Either. Of course, in Illinois, Missouri, and Kansas the blue grass cures upon the ground.

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8394. The bulk of the American farmers have farmed their own land?—To a great extent, but the renting system is coming in.

8395. But still at present they are quite in the minority?—Oh, yes, very much so.

Fixity of tenure, free sale, and fair rents.

8396. But speaking generally, the American farmers have not been oppressed by their landlords; they enjoy fixity of tenure?—They do, but we have a landlord of another class, that is the owner of mortgages, that is practically the same thing.

8397. The usurer?—I do not call him a usurer, because you can borrow of him.

8398. But the American farmers are, most of them, in the enjoyment of the three F's—fixity of tenure, free sale, and fair rents; and their rent, if they have to borrow money, is the interest on the mortgage; otherwise they have no rent?—They have, of course. The thrifty farmer there has it.

8399. They have the three F's?—But most of the farmers have come up from the working classes, and they are not generally good financiers.

8400. Notwithstanding their having them, they have not prospered; but they are in great distress as a whole?—In the wheat States they are in a bad condition, and in the other States they are in a fairly good condition.

Population and wheat area.

8401. The population of America, I believe, is constantly increasing, rapidly?—Yes.

8402. And you have told us that the area of wheat cultivation there has been stationary practically for the last—how many years?—For the last two or three years; for the last 10 years practically. Our wheat census has increased very little.

8403. But the population has been all the while increasing at a great rate?—Yes.

8404. I suppose the great bulk of the wheat in the United States is consumed in the country—by far the larger portion?—By far the larger portion.

8405. Does it not strike you as a curious thing that with a rapidly increasing population and a stationary area of wheat growing, the price of wheat in America should be falling instead of rising?—The price of our wheat depends upon what we can get for the surplus, and we have had to meet that, of course, being undersold in this market. If we raise 100,000,000 bushels of wheat more than we can sell we have got to take what we can get for it in the outside market, and we have been getting a poor price, but the price of wheat in Chicago is ruled by the prices of London to-day. Before we do any business at Chicago we have got cables from the London and Liverpool markets.

Fall in price of wheat.

8406. It seems a little curious too, that while you consume the great bulk of it the internal prices should be ruled by the price of the small quantity that you export?—We send out, probably, one-fifth of our wheat—60,000,000 to 100,000,000 bushels we send out.

8407. You consume five times as much as you export, and your home price has been steadily going down?—Yes.

8408. Mr. Chaplin asked you what the Americans attributed the fall in prices to?—We attribute it to being undersold by other people in this market.

8409. One can see why that would affect what you export, but why should it affect the great bulk of your growth that you consume in the country?—What you export will make the standard of the price, it does that in beef, and it will do it in wheat.

8410. Do you know anything of the American Farmers' Alliance organisations?—I have read a good deal about them. Two years ago they were very strong, but at the present moment they seem to be going to pieces.

The currency.

8411. Was not one of their planks more money—was that not one of their claims, to ask their own Government that they should supply them more abundantly?—They wanted to grind out currency, they wanted to inflate the currency, they wanted to increase money.

8412. Is there not a strong impression in America that the fall in prices there and in Europe is owing to changes in currency laws?—That is the opinion of a small portion of the people in the West. I do not think that it is the opinion of financiers and capitalists and the people who live in the Eastern States, and also in the Central States. We have had a very great proof of that in America last summer, when we had the panic, which came about entirely from our people thinking that we should have an inflated currency.

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8413. In that panic, money, any kind of money, was at a premium, was it not; in that panic the difficulty was to get money—it was not that you had too much money, but you could not get at money at all?—We had but little.

8414. People would not part with what they had; they hoarded it?—What caused that panic was that our Government had been coining so much silver—not coining but buying it—and hiding it away.

8415. That silver was in circulation by its paper representative?—Yes, by silver certificates.

8416. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Did it not increase the trade?—It seemed to curtail it.

8417. (*Mr. Everett.*) But even with the addition of the silver money the United States fell into trouble from not having money enough?—If you put 100 dollars or 20*l.* into a man's pocket it does not matter how much currency is ground out. You could never have enough of it last summer.

8418. The panic led to hoarding. Is it not a fact that nearly all the representatives of the Western States fought for the free coinage of silver in the House of Representatives?—Not the whole, but nearly the whole.

8419. And the opposition to it comes from the usurers?—And the men who come from the silver-using States have all fought for the free coinage of silver.

8420. And the representatives of the agricultural and cotton States, have they not?—To a great extent, it is pretty well divided there.

Tenure.

8421. (*Mr. Elton.*) You were telling us just now about the American farmers having fixity of tenure and fair rent and all those things which are characteristic of leaseholds in England; you meant the leasehold of farms, and not the freehold?—I meant the freehold, but as to the leaseholds, we have not got to the position of having very extraordinary leases.

8422. You were not so familiar with our English ways of talking, and I was going to suggest to you that a freehold has nothing to do with fixity of tenure, except, of course, in a metaphorical way. Of course a freehold includes all these things?—Yes.

8423. When you spoke of a freeholder having a fair rent, I suppose you did not attach that meaning to it?—Oh no, he has not got any rent at all.

Wheat growing in Illinois.

8424. Now about Illinois. You were telling us about the increase of the leasehold system in Illinois, and you also mentioned that you knew of corn growing to 50 bushels per acre there; is not the general rate more like 11 to 12 bushels of wheat?—I was talking of 50 bushels of Indian corn. We have never 50 bushels of wheat with us.

8425. I thought Illinois was planted with wheat?—Yes, but the average is about 15 bushels.

8426. And not so low as I put it, 12 bushels?—No; the general average is 12½, but you have to take Texas, Virginia, and other places. Illinois is a very large wheat-producing State.

8427. But it is going back in area?—Yes, gradually.

8428. The yield is getting less?—Yes.

8429. And the leasehold system is being introduced into that part?—The leasehold system is more in connexion with corn.

8430. It would appear curious, would it not, that the landlord system should suddenly come in, which means people buying and finding tenants on the wheat area, which is a decreasing area and a decreasing produce? It is more Indian corn, is it not?—You must understand that in Illinois, which is a mixed farming district, we have not any farms given entirely to wheat or to corn or to oats; it is more like what we have in England here.

8431. I am speaking of those mixed farms which used to grow wheat, and which have decreased in growing wheat now?—They have decreased.

Nebraska.

8432. Now as to Nebraska, is that going back?—That is decreasing very much in the way of wheat growing; they grow a very small percentage of wheat; I am talking of corn, that is maize. That is the great fertile belt for maize growing.

8433. Do you think that farming has improved or increased; is the renting of farms a thriving industry?—It is very thriving. Nebraska is a thriving place.

"Share rents."

8434. The share rent is something like the Metier system. When the owner lets on that system, does the owner live at a distance?—He may be living here; for instance, I know men who live in London and have land in the Western States.

8435. Is not it necessary to live upon the spot to get a share? How is that difficulty got over?—You have an agent who looks after it, but as a rule those farms are in the hands of men who have retired from them and accumulated money, and gone into the small towns, probably.

8436. Has it to be watched?—Yes, by an agent.

New Mexico and cattle rearing.

8437. About the increase of cattle, are not there districts well adapted for cattle and not yet fully occupied, like New Mexico, or is that too hot for cattle?—In New Mexico we have been declining; it is all a range country, and they have had a great deal of trouble with their grasses being eaten up.

8438. It used to stand a bison?—Only in small quantities, and they died out when they got too numerous for the country.

8439. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do you deal in cattle from New Mexico?—Yes.

8440. (*Mr. Elton.*) What do you say as to the new reserves of Omaha?—That is going to be a grazing and cattle country.

8441. It is a very good country, is it not?—Excellent.

Disposal of offal.

8442. With regard to stock killing, you told us about the offal being used in a great many ways in America; do you use the term offal in the sense that we use it, that is to say, the inferior parts of the meat?—No. The inferior parts of the meat with us are put into cans. I am talking of the stomach and puddings, and all the fat is taken out and boiled out.

8443. When we talk of it we mean a lot of things that are eaten and sold, and there is a very great demand for it. We say that there are five quarters, and the butcher's quarter is the offal?—The ordinary course is for the inferior bullock's fore quarter to be put into cans, and the hind quarters go for dressed beef.

8444. And this manure would be only the waste offal, bones, and blood?—Well, the puddings are boiled down and all the fat taken off them.

8445. And then, in America you have the demand of a peculiar class of people who want this manure, the owners of land in the cotton States?—You could export it here; it is merely because we get the most money for it there.

8446. You have a peculiar soil in the Southern States which prefers that; do you think that this would be a soil for it?—Yes, we have blood manure here to a large extent, and bones.

8447. Would it be profitable to set up a manufacture of it at Deptford?—I do not see why they should not take the bones at Deptford and use them as they do in the Southern States of America.

8448. I was leading you with the view of suggesting what might be a sudden new development of the trade?—It is merely this, that you take the general average butcher; he does not make any use of his bones or blood for manure, it all runs away. I merely assert that the dressed beef system is the most economical, and in America they do it in a wholesale way, and it is much easier done there then here.

8449. You mean the worst bones?—Yes.

8450. What I think you mean is this, that they utilise the refuse and the material down to the refuse in America, and if they do not do it here they ought to do it?—That is so, exactly.

8451. You do not pass a judgment on them, but you say they do not do it?—I mean to say you take the average butcher who kills his own meat he makes very little use of the offal. If you come down to Kelso, where I have been living this winter, you will see the blood running away, guts and everything, thrown into the river. It is a profit in itself that he is throwing away.

8452. But that would not occur in a large place like Deptford?—No.

Wheat growing a a profit.

8453. (*Lord Vernon*) You are quite certain that wheat cannot be grown at a profit of 30*s*. per quarter?—I would not like to say that it cannot, but it is my opinion that it will not. Take it and calculate it up yourself.

8454. At what prices do you think it could be grown at a profit?—I held always that 40*s*. was the lowest it could be grown at, but I have found that I have been wrong, for it can be grown below that; that is, for delivery here at that price.

8455. You are aware that the Commissioners that went over to America declared to the Richmond Commission that wheat could not be grown and delivered at 48*s*. per quarter to pay?—I am perfectly aware of it.

8456. Are you aware that it is being sold in England at an average price of very little over 30*s*. since 1885?—I admit that we made a mistake, Mr. Read, and Mr. Pell, and myself also. They eventually reduced their figures to about 42*s*., and the opinion that I always held up to that time was that it would be 40*s*. or 42*s*., but I confess that I was wrong. The great mistake we made was in the freights; they have come down so much more than we thought was likely.

8457. What reason have you for supposing that you are more right than they were in those days?—I merely put it in this way. I see the decline in the wheat districts, that is a very sure indication. In the years between 1878 and 1880, when Mr. Read and Mr. Pell reported, there was a great influx of emigration, and, of course, that gave rise to greater production.

Increasing population and exports of wheat.

8458. How do you account for the very large increase in the population of the United States since then, and that you have supplied all their wants and been able to export to England in 1883, 39,000,000 cwts.; in 1887, 40,000,000 cwts; and in 1891, 43,000,000 cwts.; so that you have exported 4,000,000 cwts. more in 1891 than in 1883; how do you account for them having had that surplus to export if it is impossible to grow it at that price?—We had that wheat to sell, and had to send it.

8459. But during the last 15 years they have gone on increasing the area under cultivation?—But that has stopped, our Government statistics show that it has stopped, and you can see it by going through the country.

Registration of mortgages.

8460. Did you not say that almost all the farms were held under mortgages?—A great number of them.

8461. Were not the large majority of them?—Yes.

8462. Are the mortgages registered?—Yes.

8463. Are they all registered?—They are all registered.

8464. Are they registered in the State or by the central Government?—They are registered in every county.

8465. In every State?—In every county of every State; the States are all divided into counties.

8466. What does the form of registering mortgages consist of?—The mortgage is signed by the man, and by his wife to save the dower right that is in it. For about 5*s*. you could register that mortgage, and it becomes a first lien upon the property, there is no expense attached to it.

8467. Everybody is obliged to do that?—He is not obliged to do it, but to make up your security. I loan a large amount on mortgage for clients (I do not do it so much now) and I have to register those mortgages for security.

8468. What do you mean by saying you have to do it?—Because that man may go and give another mortgage, and if that was recorded it would be against yours, and that would be the first lien.

8469. It is an increase of security?—It is *the* security.

8470. Is there any objection amongst landowners to register mortgages?—Not the slightest.

8471. Do not they object to their debts being recorded?—It is the only way to have security. What security would you have if you did not have it recorded?

8472. Mortgages are not registered in England?—But you can go and search the records and see that they are there.

8473. No, that is what I want to arrive at. Can anybody in America go to the registration offices and search to find out if a man's land is mortgaged?—Yes.

The very first thing we do before making a loan is to get the district registry of property to show if there are any mortgages over it.

8474. Then the Government can practically tell how much the land of the country is mortgaged for?—Yes.

8475. And for the purposes of taxation that would be a great advantage to the Government?—Well, practically we do not follow mortgages for taxation at all.

8476. Still, if you have direct taxation it would be of some use?—Yes, to a certain extent it would.

Mortgages v. rents.

8477. Do you consider that the mortgagee is any easier to deal with than the English landlord?—He is in an entirely different position; he is lending a man so much money, and when it comes due, he says you must pay it or I will take the land.

8478. It practically comes to the same thing. I say to a tenant, "You must pay your rent or you must leave, I will take the land"; so that it practically comes to the same thing, the mortgagor is the land owner?—But your tenant is only paying an interest upon capital, whereas the man who had borrowed the money had borrowed a large amount on the principal of his land. For instance, you have a farm which is worth 20,000*l.*, and you get 1,000*l.* a year for it, and you have a tenant unable to pay the interest upon the capital, but the mortgagee, the party who loans upon the land, has advanced half the principal upon that land.

8479. What I want to arrive at is this: with your experience of land mortgaged in America, do you consider that a man with a mortgage on his property is in a bit better position than the man who rents land from an English landlord?—If it comes to that he is generally in a worse position. The man who has the mortgage takes the land; it is a pure business transaction.

Change of currency.

8480. Referring to what Mr. Everett said, I suppose really the Western people who are in favour of the change of currency wish to pay the interest on their mortgages in a depreciated currency?—Exactly.

8481. Then they wish to repudiate part of their debts?—That is the way we look at it. All the mortgages are now drawn payable in gold.

8482. (*Mr. Everett.*) May I put it the other way, is it not the case that the farmers in America have mortgaged farms subject to paying an appreciated interest? They object to the interest while the sum nominally in amount is really very much more burthensome to them than it was?—I cannot exactly say. What I look at as a business man is this: I have paid that man in gold, and I want to be paid back in gold.

8483. (*Mr. Giffen.*) And the practice now is to draw the mortgages in gold so that there is no mistake?—Not only so, but if you go to a bank it is payable in gold.

Deterioration of cattle.

8484. (*Lord Vernon.*) With your experience of cattle dealing in America, do you consider there is any truth in the prevalent idea that, owing to the climate, animals deteriorate unless new blood is introduced?—There is a certain amount of truth in that. I look upon our English cattle as being very much better than we have them in America. Our cattle in the Southern States, deteriorate where they are under a warmer climate.

Housing of cattle.

8485. For how many months are you forced to house cattle in the United States where they are principally raised?—In three-fourths of the States you do not need to house cattle at all, it is only probably one-fourth part that is housed at all. I would say that 80 to 90 per cent. of our cattle are never housed in America.

8486. Is not that a great advantage that you have over us?—Yes.

8487. That is a permanent advantage that you have over the farmer here?—I would not say that, because there are many parts where they should be housed, but the large amount of capital that would have to be put into buildings deters people from doing it. In some parts I say that it is not an advantage, but in the greater portion of the agricultural country we cannot afford to put such amounts in buildings.

8488. And in many counties ought they to be housed?—It depends upon the length of the winter; about Chicago we have practically five months of winter, but as a rule it is about four months.

Sale by live weight.

8489. One other question. You were talking about the weigh-bridges and the system of selling by live weight; do you consider that the farmers, from what you know of farming over here, suffer really much from any great disadvantages in selling to the butchers?—I think that the system of selling by the lump and not weighing them at all is bad.

8490. As they do here you mean?—Yes.

Mortgages.

8491. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Has not a good deal of money been lost by lending on land which has been run out after a few years?—I would not say that there is much lost; do you refer to mortgages?

8492. Yes?—I know the general average of loss is very small.

8493. We have it in evidence before us that a great deal has been lost by the farmers throwing up their farms?—There is no doubt that in some parts of the country that is so, but taking the general average it has been good, the percentage has been very small.

8494. You cannot speak as to Manitoba?—No, I have not been there for 12 or 15 years.

Cost wheat growing.

8495. We have had some interesting evidence from that part of the world, the upshot of which is that wheat could be placed on the British market at a cost of 21*s.* or 22*s.* per quarter?—I do not see how they can do it.

8496. You are not able to point out the circumstances under which it could be done?—Take the wheat-growing States in the West and the South; I cannot see how it could be done.

8497. You do not think there is anything in the condition of the two countries that could possibly explain such a difference in the cost of production?—I cannot see it. The production of Manitoba is practically the same as Dakota, and the freights are no cheaper. They are lying in the same zone next door to one another.

Working capital per acre.

8498. What would you consider the working capital per acre would be, on a wheat farm in the Western States?—It is practically nothing. If a man has a team, and a plough, and a barrow, he can always hire, and have his reaping done, and his thrashing.

8499. With regard to the smaller mixed farms of Illinois, they are something more like the English farms?—That varies very much. As a general average, about half what you have in England; the houses are much cheaper, and the implements are much cheaper.

Local rates in Illinois.

8500. Have not the local rates increased in Illinois?—They are stationary in Illinois. I farm in Illinois, and my rates have not increased but rather decreased in the last 10 years.

8501. As to road-making and maintenance, who pays for it?—It is a bad system, of course, there. We have it done practically by the people who live on the roads; the amount of actual cash put into road-making is very little.

8502. You do not find that the local burdens do increase at all, either in Illinois or in the newer States?—I think not.

Average size of farms.

8503. (*Chairman.*) What do you consider an average farm?—About 160 acres.

8504. How much of that would be under the plough?—Certainly not more than 60 acres; the rest would be pasture.

8505. The remainder would be under fallow?—No, pasture.

8506. Is any of it under fallow?—No, they do not follow that system at all.

8507. Would the farmer work it with himself and his family?—Yes, with himself and family, and where there is no family with a man from outside.

8508. That would be considered enough?—Yes; on my farm of 250 acres I never keep more than three men, and only two in winter.

8509. I am speaking of an average farm of 160 acres could the owner work it with his family or with one labourer?—Yes.

8510. Do you rent your land?—I keep it as a pleasure farm.

Life of American and English farmer compared.

8511. And the farmer who lives on 160 acres has a very hard life of it?—Exceedingly; he does not compare with the English farmer, but with the English agricultural labourer.

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8512. (*Lord Vernon.*) When you say that, do you speak generally of all the agriculturists in the United States?—No, I say that I am talking of the Western States. When you come to the Eastern States you find that the farmer there compares with our farmer, he lives more economically, but in the Western States he is badly housed, badly fed, and he has to do a great deal of hard work.

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8513. Would you say what you mean by a Western farmer?—You take, for instance, farmers going anywhere West of the Mississippi River.

8514–15. (*Mr. Everett.*) With regard to these mortgaged farmers, are you aware that until 1873 silver was the full legal tender in America just the same as gold?—No.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. R. H. Pringle.

MR. R. HUNTER PRINGLE called and examined.

Mr. R. H. Pringle.

8516. (*Chairman.*) You are one of the Assistant Commissioners who have reported upon the state of agriculture in various parts of the country?—Yes.

Burdens on land in Essex.

8517. If you refer to page 79 of your Report with regard to rates, you will see that you have given four cases of actual demands for rates. There are four different places, and they vary from 1*s.* 6*d.* in the pound to 2*s.* 8*d.* in the pound. Then later in paragraph 189, you say, "The burdens upon land in most districts in Essex are, at the present time, very onerous"; and there you put the poor, and highway, and county rates at 3*s.* 6*d.* in the pound. Is that an estimate of your own, or is it based on any figures?—Paragraph 189 is a quotation from a report which was given to me.

8518. I see it is not your own; but it does not seem to be compatible with the previous statement of the particular data covered by your own inquiry?—The first statement is a statement of fact which was handed to me.

8519. Do you gather from that that the statement made to you by those persons that the poor, highway, and county rate is 3*s.* 6*d.*; that it cannot be altogether relied upon?—No; they are different unions.

8520. Paragraph 189 as compared with the previous statement, derived from your own observation on the four cases, is rather different. You will observe that the rates are stated to be from 1*s.* 6½*d.* to 2*s.* 8½*d.*?—The county rates in the first place mentioned are not included in the 2*s.* 1*d.* The county rates are included in the second case I mention. The county rate for this year was 6*d.*; that would bring the top figure up to 2*s.* 7*d.*

8521. This would hardly account for this very considerable difference?—It would not.

8522. We may take it that this statement in paragraph 189 is one made to you, but not confirmed by actual inquiry?—No; because it referred to the district of the gentleman who gave it to me, the agent of a very large estate. The rates vary considerably in Essex, but I did look over the figures, and I thought it was a very fair statement.

Ratio of rate assessments to rent.

8523. Now if you turn to the last page in the Appendix of your Report, page 127, you find there a statement showing the assessment of rates in the pound on various farms. They seem to be extraordinarily heavy, and I should imagine they could hardly be accurate. The assessment in the pound is more than the rent. 52*l.* is the assessment more than the rent, and the rate in the pound on land is 22*s.*?—I see it; I was rather surprised at it myself. I only got this table the very day that I returned, and I have not finally revised it.

8524. (*Mr. Little.*) What you desire to say is, that the ratio of the assessment to the actual rent is as 22*s.* to a pound; you do not mean that the rate levied is 22*s.* in the pound?—This table is an exact copy from statements that were made to me by a certain gentleman, and I wish that he had given the rents and all particulars, but he did not do so.

8525. (*Chairman.*) I think you should ask him for further particulars, because it looks so startling a statement, unless it is actually verified one would hardly like to draw conclusions from it?—I can get the particulars without the slightest difficulty.

Scotch farmers in Essex.

8526. In your account of the Scotch farmers in Essex, an extremely interesting account, you seem to come to the conclusion that on the whole they are doing fairly well?—I would not like to go so far as that.

8527. Not quite so far; that is the conclusion I draw from your Report; what would you say of them?—I think I could put my fingers upon three of them that are doing fairly well, considering the times. I think that the Scotch settlers, taking everything into consideration, are holding their own.

8528. "Holding their own"?—I put it in this way; I think they are losing less.

8529. That is a different conclusion to holding their own?—They are losing less than their neighbours.

8530. There is some difference between holding their own, and losing less?—Perhaps so, but I think they are losing less than the people round about them, and consequently they are doing more than holding their own.

8531. The last two years were exceptionally bad years were they not?—Yes.

Seasons and profits.

8532. And even the Scotch farmers must have done badly during the last two years, on account of the bad seasons?—Yes, Appendix C. II. comes from a Scotch farm. His balance sheets show a profit of 12½ per cent. on capital; that is on page 95 of the Summary.

8533. I have not examined carefully the whole of these figures. Does that show a 12½ per cent. profit on this year?—Yes, 1892–93 is included.

8534–8. Including the two bad years 1892–93?—Yes, both years are included.

8539. I presume where there is only 71 acres out of 636 acres under the plough, it is mainly for consumption on the farm, or almost entirely?—Almost entirely.

8540. And therefore the price of the corn would not affect the farm?—Not much.

8541. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Upon the question of Essex I think it would save time if I call your attention to paragraph 47, page 41, in which you say this, "I must "confess that I thought the character of the seasons "between 1880 and 1892 did not receive quite fair "treatment in Essex"; and then you go on to say this at the end, "It is a matter of history that of 12 "years referred to, 7 are under average, but it was "repeatedly stated by the farmers of mixed soil that "had it not been for the low prices, and the heavy "and increasing cost of labour, and the want of farm-"ing capital, on the three-horse land, the general run "of the Essex farms was not very far astray." I should like to have that cleared up?—Yes.

8542. (*Chairman.*) If we are to take the average profit of the years before 1892, they have been for six or seven years distinctly above the average per acre. If you look at this Return (*see* Appendix B.) of the seasons before 1892 you will see that the produce of corn was distinctly above the average, and then came two years, 1892 and 1893, which were extraordinarily bad. I would like to ask you whether the Scotch farmers, some of them at all events, are in occupation of some of the very bad land you have spoken of in your Report?—I visited four farmers on the very worst land, the very stiffest clay in the Dengie Hundred.

Scotch farmers in Essex.

8543. How were the Scotch farmers doing there?—It is not very easy to say how they were doing; they were there.

8544. Were they holding their own, apart from the bad season?—They were suffering, but they do not spend money often on the stiffest lands in cultivating, and tilling the land, and consequently they are less out of pocket.

8545. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do they work harder?—No doubt about it; they all work.

8546. Do the family all work?—Yes.

8547. (*Chairman.*) Do you think that they understood better how to lay down the land to grass?—I was not at all satisfied with the attempts at establishing pastures, either temporary or permanent, in the stiffer lands, but when I went with a farmer on the mixed soils, a man who understood his business, I was impressed with the fact that undoubtedly the pastures were good, and that I attribute to their knowledge of grass-farming.

8548. You say in paragraph 69 that "The Scotchman "carries out the temporary pasture system, keeping as "small an acreage in cultivation as possible, and cutting "expenses down to the lowest working figure"; that would seem to indicate that they have introduced a somewhat different system?—So they have.

8549. And that system has operated on the whole better?—I think it has.

8550. Is their example being followed by Essex farmers?—Yes, to a small extent; but I do not think that it has pleased them. One or two I met were decidedly in favour of it, and it had suited, and proved satisfactory. Others were not pleased with their experience, and were still of opinion that it is not a good system.

Essex farmers.

8551. Among the Essex farmers, other than the Scotch farmers, have you found any that pursued the old system; were they holding their own?—No, I do not think so.

8552. Are they all losing money?—I certainly think so, as far as I was in a position to judge.

8553. In that district that you speak of?—All through these unions that you deputed me to go through.

8554. Then they have not imitated the Scotch farmers, and cut down expenses, and done their own labouring in the same degree?—I would not like to say that the Essex farmers do not work themselves, because I think that the Essex farmers were as hard working as the Scotchmen. I could not find any fault with them, but they, as a rule, have bigger concerns; they have more horses and more labourers, and more land under cultivation, and consequently a man would be rather making a fool of himself if he took a spade and dug a hole; he ought to be superintending his men.

8555. They still keep up the corn?—There is no doubt about that; I had that impression almost everywhere.

8556. Is the land only suitable to wheat, or would it grow other corn?—The mixed soils are suited to mixed farming.

8557. What do you say as to the very stiff soils?—The evidence shows me that the old rotation was the best system.

Heavy soils.

8558. But the very heavy soils, are they suited only to the growth of wheat?—I did not see any good temporary grass in the heavy soils.

8559. I am not now talking about grass, but as between wheat and other corn?—Barley, I do not think does well there; oats can grow fairly well, but wheat undoubtedly is the crop, and beans also.

8560. We may take it that they have suffered from the low price of wheat as compared with land suitable for growing other corn from the fact that wheat is mainly the crop that is suited to them?—I think so.

8561. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I do not quite understand why this heavy land should not go to grass under a proper system?—The difficulty in the first place is this, it is very difficult as far as I could judge to get a plant. I was not there in the spring, but I think it would be rather difficult to get a nice seed bed for grass seeds, that is the first difficulty, and on that very deep stiff London clay if a track of wet weather set on, the land would get waterlogged below, and then the grass roots might rot out.

8562. Even if well drained?—Yes. Good thorough drainage would help. I have seen very admirable pastures on the stiff clay in Strathearn in Scotland.

8563. And on the London clay in places?—Do you mean the old pastures?

8564. Yes?—I could not say that they were very good. I do not think that they were like pastures that would fatten a bullock.

8565. You did not see any promising pastures?—I did not see any pastures under 20 years old that I would consider had the makings of a good pasture, but I was there in November and December, and could hardly form a very good opinion.

Scotch farmers in Essex.

8566. I suppose the Scotch farmers were attracted by the extreme lowness of the rent?—Yes, and the proximity to London.

8567. Would not they have done better with better land elsewhere at a higher rent?—The Scotch farmers never contrasted Essex with any other English county, but they contrasted Essex freely with Scotland, and they expressed themselves as satisfied.

8568. They fared better than they would have done if they had stopped in Scotland?—Yes.

8569. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) There is no market garden cultivation in the district you visited?—None.

8570. That would be above, at Rainham?—That would be nearer to London.

8571. However, there is none in the district you visited?—None.

Cost of wheat growing abroad.

8572. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You recommend the Commission to get reliable information upon what is the cost of growing wheat in foreign countries. Have you any information that you could give us?—No, I wish I had. The only information that I might have added to this Report if I had been called upon to do so, was that which I received from an Argentine farmer a month ago, and if his statement is true they can grow wheat at a fair profit in the Argentine Republic at a figure that fairly startled me. He said that it could be done at 20*s.* a quarter, and he could make a fair profit of it.

8573. 20*s.* a quarter in London?—Yes, he said so, and I took figures which I have in my book.

8574. You state, on page 82, paragraph 196, "At "present witnesses are not wanting who are prepared "to prove that even were the price of wheat to fall to "26*s.* per quarter, it will be grown in America and "shipped to the British market?"—Yes.

8575. You heard Mr. Clay's evidence, did you not?—I did.

8576. And it seemed rather to point to the fact that the prices would be a great deal more than 26*s.* per quarter for the American producer?—Yes.

8577. Who are the witnesses to whom you refer?—They were two gentlemen whom I met in the train between Chelmsford and Colchester, and they worked out figures—17*s.* 6*d.* was the figure of one of them, and the other was 22*s.*

8578. Do you think that at that price growers of wheat in the United States could send it to the London market?—These gentlemen came to me and said so.

8579. What is your conclusion regarding it comparing the evidence of those two gentleman whom you have heard yourself and the evidence of Mr. Clay which you have heard this morning?—I have not an opinion upon the subject, there is such an immense difference between the two that it would be almost impossible to say anything.

8580. Were they speaking of the wheat from the same localities, that is the far West?—They were talking of wheat growing states in the West, I think Dakota was mentioned.

8581. But you cannot carry the information upon the subject any further?—No, but it has made me think that I would like uncommonly well to know what they really can sell wheat at with profit.

Area of land out of cultivation in Essex.

8582. Can you give us the per-centage of land in Essex that you think is not able to pay any rent. Have you formed any calculation upon that point?—I tried, in the first place, to form a calculation, but I thought that any calculation I could form would be of no value to the Commission, so I prepared a lot of maps, or got them prepared, and they are here to show some of the land that has gone out of cultivation, and I could not think of any better way of answering a question of that kind. May I show them to you? (*The maps were produced. See map appended to Mr. Hunter Pringle's Report on Essex.*) This is known as the Dengie Hundred, and there are two or three specimen parishes taken out, and that land crossed red has gone out of cultivation.

8583. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) All the land within the red marks?—No; this is a six-inch scale, and all these fields crossed have gone out of cultivation. 20 years ago these were all in cultivation; they were then in arable cultivation. This parish (*pointing*) has not been marked; I went over a good deal of it. Latchingdon is as bad as this; I should say, perhaps, worse.

8584. But you have not had time to go over it?—This map was made for me by two gentlemen in Maldon, and they undertook as much as they could, and there is a key here which says, "At present, parti- "culars have only been obtained of the land out of "cultivation in the parishes of Woodham Ferris, Stow "Maries, north of the Hundred, and Cold Norton. "These are the parishes (*pointing*)." Particulars are

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being obtained of the land out of cultivation in Purleigh, Latchingdon, Althorne, Mayland, and Cricksea, and it may be generally stated that there is as much land out of cultivation in these parishes as in the parishes above mentioned, which are typical parishes; so that you may conclude that the remarks on the map which are over these parishes, might very safely be extended over the district.

8585. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You have not reduced it to a percentage?—No, I would not like to undertake that, till the maps are completed.

8586. And that applies to the very stiff clay land?—That does; but here we will go to another union (*producing another map*). This is a map of the Chelmsford Union, and this was kindly done for me by Mr. Lawrence Marriage and Lord Petre's agent, Mr. Coverdale; this was done within the last fortnight. What is painted brown is all out of cultivation; the part marked green has been seeded down with permanent pasture seed.

8587. Is this land as stiff as that in the Dengie Hundred?—Almost.

8588. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Have you got the acreage of the union?—It is not a whole union.

8589. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Is this particularly over a considerable part of Essex?—Yes, it is all the heavy land, it is near Canewdon; this is very stiff clay. I walked over this (*pointing*), and rode over that, and I am afraid most of it is out of cultivation.

8590. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What area does that represent?—About 28,000 acres are represented by this ordnance sheet.

8591. In one district alone?—On this map I should think there is about not quite half of the land gone out of cultivation. In some other districts there is certainly three-fourths gone out of cultivation. This (*producing another map*) is a very bad parish. This is Purleigh; the top end is taken in in this map, and it is really almost all gone out of cultivation. These maps do not cover the whole ground. It is only districts; this uncultivated land extends over parishes that have not been taken in at all.

8592. (*Chairman.*) When you speak of the land out of cultivation do you mean that it is unlet and not in occupation?—It is occupied.

8593. But allowed to go down into grass?—That is it.

8594. Has grass been laid down or has it fallen back into grass?—Some of it has never been seeded down at all; it has been allowed to tumble down.

8595. But other portions have been laid down in grass?—A good deal of it was sown with Italian rye grass and clovers, and has not been broken up.

8596. When you say gone out of cultivation, it does not mean that it has gone out of cultivation altogether?—It is no longer ploughed.

8597. Do you mean it has gone out of corn cultivation?—Yes.

8598. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Is it practically worthless; say 1s. an acre?—I walked over a great deal of land that I would not have taken for nothing.

Land unable to pay rent.

8599. (*Mr. Giffen.*) That is my point, whether it was capable of paying rent of that kind, how much was there of it?—A great deal of it was worth nothing as grazing unless you fed animals upon it with purchased food. One farm that I was over was somewhere about 700 acres, but there was 200 acres of that marsh land, and the cattle fed on the marsh land during the day, and they used the upper soil as a kind of exercising ground. The farmer told me that he could not keep stock on this tumble-down pasture.

8600. But you are not prepared to give us any idea of the per-centage of land in Essex that is in a position not to pay any rent?—I do not think that I am in a position to do that. I can get information that would do it.

8601. I think you told us that in certain parts there is a considerable quantity of land in that position?—Yes.

8602. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Have you any idea of the total acreage at all that has come under your own notice, that is, in this condition?—I would not like to hazard a statement. I was very anxious indeed to have those maps completed, and then I would have been in a position to say something useful, but in my present condition, with the maps not completed I cannot do so.

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8603. Do I understand that by completing those maps you could give accurate information as to the extent of the land in that condition?—I could clearly, as far as the maps would do it.

8604. You could obtain reliable information as to the land in Essex that has fallen into this deplorable state?—I could.

8605. Would it be a long operation?—I think not. (*See maps appended to Mr. Pringle's Report on Essex.*)

Land out of cultivation.

8606. (*Chairman.*) There seems to be three classes of land that has gone out of cultivation, namely, some land laid down to grass, and other land which has tumbled down into grass, and other land which is cultivated in rye grass and grass of that kind. Is not that so?—Yes.

8607. All of those you include under the head "going out of cultivation"?—Yes.

8608. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) In my question I referred to the land that you described as practically worthless, tumbled down itself, or which had rye grass sown with it, which is practically the same thing?—Practically the same thing.

8609. The land which has been laid down to grass I presume you would not describe as worthless?—Certainly not; that land is coloured green on those maps, and there is almost none of it.

8610. But there is a vast area of land which you describe as worthless, which has fallen in Essex?—There is an enormous area.

8611. Could you obtain accurate information as to the extent of the class of land if those maps were completed and you had time at your disposal?—Yes; I could and would undertake to do it.

Cost of wheat growing.

8612. (*Mr. Clay.*) Regarding the information from those two friends about the production of wheat, you as a practical farmer do not believe that you could cultivate wheat at 18s.?—Produce from the land?

8613. Yes?—It is hard to believe, I admit.

8614. Because wheat from Dakota at the present day is at 35 cents, that is 1s. 5d. per bushel, and a quarter would come to about 12s. Now the average yield in Dakota is about 12 or 13 bushels, that would be 18s. to 19s. per acre. Is it possible that any man in America could cultivate land and get 18s. per acre off it?—I do not know what the cost of cultivation of land in America is, but it would be an enormous stretch of imagination to conceive that wheat can be grown at that price. But still they continue to send it.

8615. That is a necessity. Wheat at that price is not like wheat here. You have the straw here,—a certain amount of revenue from straw. There they have none, so that upon the bare 18s., if your two friends are correct, do you believe it can be done?—I left them with the impression that it could not, but I did not say anything.

Laying down land to grass.

8616. Regarding laying down to grass, is it not possible that grass land, laid down to grass, under favourable circumstances, and fed afterwards by sheep and cattle, might not be made more profitable than it is now?—I think so if you could do it, if you could get it to grow.

8617. Will the land still grow, that is laid down to grass?—I believe the mixed soils would, but I would hesitate before saying the same of the three-horse land.

8618. Still, would not the three-horse land laid down be fit, with proper food and manure laid on, for keeping dairy cattle or sheep?—Not sheep; sheep would not do there at all.

8619. Well, dairy cattle then?—Yes, provided that you could get the land to take grass and the grass to grow. There is no reason why it should not carry cattle.

8620. That is the only reason why the Scotch farmers on the dairy principle in giving up arable land and replacing it by grass have been more successful than the other farmers?—I did not intend to say in this Report, that the Scotch farmer on the three-horse land was doing any better than any body else. I was particularly guarded not to say so. I do not think that the Scotch farmer on the very stiff land is doing very much good.

8621. Is he following out that principle of laying down to grass?—Yes, and consequently he is spending less.

8622. Is he making any more rent than on the other system?—Scotchmen are not so willing to tell you things as Englishmen.

8623. But you might see for yourself?—I can see the top soil, but not below.

8624. You said that that land would not pay to cultivate?—That is my clear opinion.

8625. Would it in any way pay to release a certain portion at half-a-crown an acre upon laying it down to grass?—Yes, if you do not make much you do not lose much. You do away with the working expenses.

8626. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Did you find out what seed they had given in the attempts to lay it down?—I did.

8627. If it is in this Report I need not trouble you?—Yes, it is there.

Possibility of growing grasses in Essex.

8628. In much finer climates than some of the clay lands in Scotland, such as you have in Essex, you would think that the grasses there in moderate seasons would have a much better chance?—The climate in Essex is rather against the grass system. I got information from the Meteorological Society about that. The rainfall in Essex, the average of the last 16 years, has been about 21½ inches; the rainfall in my part of Roxburghshire, Teviotside, varies from 26 to 36 inches. The rainfall of Fifeshire I think is about the same. It is heavier in Kinross, the nearer to the east the dryer you get. But the climate in Essex is rather against the grass, it is too dry in spring and summer.

The Agricultural Holdings Act. Compensation.

8629. In regard to this question in paragraph 152, "Compensation under the Agricultural Holdings Act "for stuff produced on their own holding." Did any of them give you any practical way of carrying that out, so that interests might be properly protected?—No, they did not go deep into the Agricultural Holdings Act at all, they just simply referred to it in general terms.

8630. Did they get their barn books in such a state that you could check between what was sent to market and what was consumed on the farm?—I saw no granary books in Essex similar to what we keep in Scotland, and I should think there would be considerable difficulty in carrying out what you are aiming at.

Depression in Essex.

8631. (*Mr. Little.*) I think the effect of your Report is that there is a deplorable condition of affairs in Essex very widely spread?—Yes; all over the unions that I went to.

8632. And you attribute that principally to a decrease in the price of corn?—Yes, chiefly to that.

8633. (*Chairman.*) And especially to the decrease in the price of wheat?—Yes.

8634. (*Mr. Little.*) You say especially wheat, has it affected all classes of farmers?—It would be very difficult to say that it had affected the farmer who is still making 12½ per cent on his capital.

8635. Does that apply to all classes of farmers?—It has affected all classes, more or less.

Large and small farms compared.

8636. Do you think that there is any clear distinction between the large farmer and the small farmer in this respect; any wide difference I mean?—I do, from what I saw. I did not see many small holdings, but the few that I did see were in a deplorable condition.

8637. Worse than the larger holdings?—Yes, I went over one large farm the accounts of which are here. I saw a small holding of 40 acres alongside it, and I went over that small holding too, and it was in a terrible state; the contrast was terrible.

8638. Then even the small farmer who does the principal part of the labour all by himself or his family does he suffer as much as the large farmer?—No; once you get over a certain area it may be 60 or 70 acres where it was a workable size and where a pair of horses would find full employment, probably the man whose family worked on the farm was doing as well as anybody; not perhaps as well as the large men with capital, but when you come on to small places of 30 or 40 acres they seem to be suffering intensely.

Scotch farmers in Essex.

8639. The comparative success of the Scotch farmers you attribute to following a new system of farming?—Yes.

8640. Dairying, the substitution of oats for wheat, the reduction in the cost of labour, and the carrying on of the grass for three or four years?—That is exactly what occurred to me.

8641. Has that example been followed at all by the Essex farmers?—Yes, more or less it has.

8642. Then I think you remarked on the industry of the Scotchman's family. Up to what size farms would a Scotchman's family work at actual manual labour?—I was over a farm 720 or 730 acres in which the wife and the family were working hard when I was there.

8643. What description of work were they doing?—Dairying; and I saw one of the sons throwing mangolds into a cart.

8644. Would there be any great difference in that respect between the English and the Scotch farmer?—Yes, I think there is a difference.

8645. The families are more industrious?—Yes, I think there is a difference.

The Agricultural Holdings Act. Compensation.

8646. With regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act you have printed an elaborate scale for compensation which I understand is adopted generally by valuers?—Yes, that is taken from a pamphlet.

8647. Is there any complaint as to the inadequacy of that scale of compensation? Did you receive any complaints?—Not directly aimed at this.

8648. Not on that point?—No.

8649. I observe in paragraph 151 complaints were made of the vagueness of the award. Is an award valid under the Agricultural Holdings Act which does not state the amount that was awarded for a particular thing?—I take it that certainly the award must state the amount, but it does not state the way in which it is arrived at.

Tithe.

8650. Then, with regard to the tithe question, you have entered rather largely into that question. There seems to be a complaint that the Tithe Act of 1891 has entirely failed to give relief?—There has been a disappointment.

8651. You do not complain that the Commissioners who have had to settle the value of the land have misinterpreted the Act?—No; I think they have interpreted the Act perfectly correctly.

8652. The Act as it was drawn gives no sufficient relief to the owners of land where tithe equals rent or approaches rent?—It does not give the relief that they think they are entitled to.

Corn returns.

8653. I will not go into the question of the comparative burden of tithe, because that is a very large question. There have been considerable complaints, I understand, as to the corn returns—have you examined into that question?—There are five returning markets for Essex, Chelmsford, Colchester, Romford, Saffron Walden, and Braintree, and I really could not say any more upon the subject.

8654. You referred to complaints that were made that the returns misrepresent the price?—That is all.

Land tax.

8655. With regard to the land tax; you have given the land taxes charged in 1798 and the land tax which is charged now, and you then proceed to estimate how much per acre the present amount of land tax is?—Yes.

8656. But it surely is very much more than that per acre, because the land tax has been redeemed in some cases, and a certain quantity of land has been exonerated?—Deducting the land which has been exonerated and redeemed from the original amount, the land tax per acre still remaining is as shown in these figures.

8657. But only a portion of the land 56 per cent. is taxed, presumably, 56 per cent. of the area?—I doubt not.

8658. Therefore it is very much more per acre than appears by this account?—Yes, there is a lot of land in Essex which pays no land tax now.

8659. But does the land which is out of cultivation pay land tax?—Yes, I believe so.

8660. And it can be got?—Yes.

8661. How can it be got?—I do not know.

8662. The parish has to make up the deficiency of the land out of cultivation has it not? Each parish has to pay a certain quota. If it cannot be recovered from one could it be recovered from others?—I do not know.

Depression in Essex.

8663. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) From your Report you say this great depression in Essex began in 1875?—Yes; the evidence is to that effect.

8664. But before that period you say that things had been quite prosperous?—I think so. I was led to believe so.

8665. In 1880 and 1884 the number of farms that was given up was enormous, and this, I understand, was the case, although between 1880 and 1886 there had been reductions of from 25 to 80 per cent. in the rent?—Yes.

Fall in price of land.

8666. I wanted to ask you a question about the sales of land during the same time. You say they were frequent, and disastrous to sellers. Does that mean that the price to sellers had practically gone to nothing?—It had immensely fallen.

8667. You mentioned an island in paragraph 45. It was a very remarkable instance. You speak of 600 acres (half saltings) being purchased about 1875 for 8,000*l.*?—I remember it.

8668. In 1885 it was sold for 420*l.*; could you give more information about it?—The name of the island was Peewit; 600 acres, 300 being saltings.

8669. What do you call saltings?—As the honourable Commissioner says, it is watered occasionally by salt water. "It is all grass land. Originally, 20 years " ago, it cost 8,000*l.*, expenses included, it was " purchased eight years ago for 420*l.*, boats, &c. in" cluded. He has laid out 200*l.* in a new sea-wall"—that is the evidence in my book.

8670. Was there anything peculiar about it?—It was very stiff clay. The gentleman that bought the island gave me that information, and I was also told that along with the island for that 420*l.* he got all the boats connected with it.

8671. Was it actually an island?—Yes.

8672. However, it fell from 8,000*l.* in 1875 to 420*l.* in 1885?—Yes, it was extraordinary.

8673. In 1887 you say, "There has been one glimmer of light"—that was a first-rate season?—A good season.

8674. And what was the result in spite of that season?—The result was, that they could pay their rent, they paid their rent, they held their own, but there was nothing over.

8675. They made nothing?—They made nothing.

Land out of cultivation.

8676. No profit. You saw a good deal of land that was once so celebrated for the excellence of its crops, now making nothing?—Yes, a great deal of land that I knew.

8677. You mentioned two parishes, Canewdon and Northpits, what do you say of those?—I stayed at Canewdon in 1875 for a fortnight. At that time, those farms were all in cultivation, and they were in beautiful crops. It was just before harvest, when I was there. I walked over them a few weeks ago, and they are all tumbled down to grass.

8678. Absolutely or practically worthless?—Practically worthless.

Heavy soils

8679. As regards the future, how is the farming to be carried on on this strong land which you have been speaking of, in districts such as in Canewdon and Northpits?—With the present price of corn, it cannot be carried on on the Essex system of farming. If it could be laid down to grass, it would be worth something.

8680. It would be impossible, under the present circumstances, to pay the labour bill?—I do not think it would not pay the labour bill. All the evidence went to convince me that it could not pay a labour bill.

Scotch farmers in Essex.

8681. With reference to what you told the President about the Scotch farmers, how many did you say were losing less, I think you said three were doing fairly well?—I said I could put my finger upon three who were doing fairly well, and I think I could.

8682. The whole number being 120 or 130?—I did not see them all.

8683. How many did you see?—I think I saw about 25.

8684. Out of that number, three you would say were doing fairly well?—Yes.

8685. Then with regard to the others, the most you would say is that they were losing less than their neighbours?—There was one Scotch farmer doing very well he said, but I was not there. I thought, from what I heard from other quarters, he was not.

8686. Where they have been successful, so far as you have been describing them as doing fairly well, that is because they have cut down their expenses to so great an extent, is it not?—Yes.

8687. Is not it the case that where the Scotch farmers have succeeded it has been very injurious to the rural population in point of employment?—Undoubtedly so.

8688. In paragraph 135 you make a statement, "Where formerly three labourers earned a livelihood, " not more than one will now be found"; that is with reference to the Scotch system.—Yes, that is the Scotch system; the substitution of pasture for arable.

8689. "So long as Scotchmen continue to hire Essex " land, the substitution of pastural for arable farming " may be expected, and along with it a decrease in " employment to the rural population"; is that so?—Yes.

8690. That is the general result of the importation of Scotch farmers into Essex?—Yes; I think there are a few Scotch farmers who are, perhaps leaving their land lying for two years in grass, but as a rule they leave it in three and four years, and cut down their expenses as much as possible.

8691. It is the case, is it not, that a great many farms have been taken almost without rent of late?—A great many farms.

8692. And given up again?—And given up again.

8693. In paragraph 87 you maintain that there has been no change for the better at all. That is since the period when Mr. Druce visited Essex 10 years ago.—As far as I can gather, there has been no change for the better.

Cost of restoring land to cultivation.

8694. I gather from your Report that when once the Essex land has been allowed to lay itself down to grass in the manner you have described, that it takes a very considerable outlay, under any circumstances, to restore it to cultivation again?—I am sure of it. I saw an example on Haseleigh Farm of a field out of cultivation for three years, and it was broken up, and it had been grabbed and harrowed just before I was there, and the amount of twitch on the surface was something extraordinary. I went into the field and rooted it up with my foot, and there was as much below as above.

8695. You give an estimate of what it costs at page 15, 10*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.*; where did you obtain the estimate?—Would you wish the name?

8696. Yes.—From Mr. Edward Strutt. It was taken from his books; Lord Rayleigh's agent, and he farms 8,000 acres at present.

8697. It was from a practical man?—Yes, and I submitted it to various bodies of practical farmers of Essex before I made use of the information.

8698. What would be the view of practical men of any such attempt to restore the strong land of Essex at the present time and at present prices?—They simply said that it was not worth considering the question, that it would be the act of a madman and could not be done at any profit.

8699. I should not be wrong in saying that any prospect with present prices of seeing golden grain waving again in that part of Essex would be a perfectly Utopian idea?—I am afraid after this season that there will be of golden grain about one-half the quantity, and the acreage under corn will be getting less and less.

Heavy soil.

8700. In paragraphs 93, 94, and 95, I understand the general drift of your Report on this point to be that you are of opinion that on these particular classes of land it is almost impossible to make it grow good grass permanently?—Altogether from what I saw and from what I heard, my opinion is that it would be very difficult to get it to grow there well, but with better management an improvement might be effected.

8701. Take paragraph 133, I suppose this expresses your view generally on the three-horse lands, by three-horse lands you mean the strongest lands?—The strongest lands.

8702. "The difficulty of growing grass and roots has " prevented the spread of dairy farming and the " alteration of system which has accompanied the in" troduction of cows on many mixed farms cannot, " therefore, be related of this peculiar variety of soil. " Nature has apparently decided that three-horse " lands shall be suitable for one style of farming, and " that one unfortunately the least suited to the present " prices of agricultural produce." You mean by that wheat growing?—That is what I mean.

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8703. And practically your view is this, that for this class of land wheat growing is the only mode of cultivating it?—That is unfortunately the best sytem of cultivating.

8704. Because it will not grow really anything else?—I would not like to say that it would not grow anything else, or that it would not grow grass, but I think all the evidence that I saw and heard induced me to believe that it would not. There might be some system discovered, some grass discovered that would enable it to grow grass.

8705. But as far as you know at present it is a very hopeless prospect?—It is that.

Land out of cultivation.

8706. Do you anticipate a further increase of land going out of cultivation in Essex than what you have seen already?—Yes, I do.

8707. To a large extent?—Yes; I would not like to anticipate what the effect of last year will be.

8708. If the present prices continue you anticipate that there must be a very great increase in the area of land that is already out of cultivation?—There must.

8709 And what will be the effect under those circumstances upon the labourers?—If there is no land under cultivation the labourers will not be required.

8710. I observe that you say that "Everything points "to a winter and a spring of exceptional hardship "and privation for the labourers in the parts of Essex "through which I passed." You can see no means of cultivating the land by which this hardship could be averted to any degree?—Not if the cultivation of land is to be conducted with a profit—not if profit is to take any part in the play.

Reduction of labour.

8711. Were you told by anybody that they would have to discharge their labourers?—Yes.

8712. By the farmers whom you visited, or the lands you walked over, or where did you get it?—Many farmers mentioned it indirectly, and one gentleman mentioned it directly, and I think I give a quotation. That was a landlord farming his own land, and he made the statement to me which I put in the Report.

8713. Where is that?—Paragraph 105, page 53.

8714. "I have now told my bailiff that my labourers must go." Is that the point?—Yes.

Scotch farmers in Essex.

8715. I observe in paragraph 117 you criticise very severely the character of the farming by Scotch farmers. You say, "On several farms held by Scotchmen the "fallow lands were very foul, and the old pastures "decidedly impoverished. Hay-cutting and selling, one "of the surest ways of destroying grass pastures has "been prosecuted to an unjustifiable extent. . . . "I observed a great deal of this agricultural greed "going on, but I am of opinion that Scotchmen are "the chief culprits." Did you find the English farmers guilty of the same malpractices?—Not to such a large extent as amongst the Scotchmen. I am very decided upon that.

8716. The fact is that those Scotch farmers were taking all that they could possibly get out of the land?—That is what they were doing, and using nitrate of soda, I think improperly.

8717. And that accounts for their losing less than their neighbours?—It may be.

8718. What class of farms do you consider has suffered most?—Very strong soils, three-horse soils which are adapted to the growing of wheat and beans, and where bare fallows are necessary.

8719. I ought to have said, what class of farm in point of size has suffered most?—I thought the very small ones under 40 acres were suffering more than any other class. I saw very few of them.

8720. What is the case with regard to medium sized farms of 200 or 250 acres?—I think I have a paragraph about that.

8721. I see in paragraph 116 you say, "So far as I "could see the larger farmers have suffered no more "than those in occupations which might be described "as of medium size, and both have suffered less than "the holder of small areas"?—Yes.

Low prices.

8722. Now, with regard to the remedies for this state of things, what are the opinions that you gathered in Essex from the men who suffered themselves?—They thought that the low price of wheat and the low price of beef and mutton were the chief causes of the depression.

8723. And that anything that would raise the prices would improve their position, I suppose?—I think what you have just now said is an exact quotation of what they say.

8724. Did they look to anything else?—They were very severe upon the burthens upon the land.

Burdens on land.

8725. With what they considered adequate reductions in those burthens, do they think it would be possible to continue to cultivate this land?—It was so stated at all the meetings. They believe that the land is carrying undue taxation, and they thought if the land was fairly taxed it could still compete with the foreigner.

8726. Is it your opinion from what you saw that any reduction of the burthens on the land that is conceivably possible would enable them to cultivate this worst class of land?—Would you urge that question upon me?

8727. Yes?—I think that in the stiffest soils it has got beyond the question of taxation altogether.

Land laid down to grass.

8728. What is your idea of any possible improvement. I observe that in paragraph 198 you say, "Concurring "as I do, with these opinions, it is by no means easy "to see or recommend any speedy course of action. "The main hope lies, I think, in the *possibility* of laying "more of the land down to grass and farming it on "some rotation where the extent under the plough is "kept at the lowest economical area." Does that apply to this worst class of land, because that would appear to me to be inconsistent with what you have said about grass in other parts of the Report?—I think, taking Essex all over, that an increase of grass, the introduction of the border six or seven years rotation, would be advantageous to all parts of Essex.

8729. The introduction of what?—Of a temporary pasture rotation, would be advantageous to all parts of Essex. But I put in the word "possibility" because I am not altogether so sure that the very stiff land could be got to lie in grass.

8730. A vast number of notices to quit have been given during last year, I understand?—A great many.

8731. If those are carried out there will be thousands of acres, I suppose, in addition uncultivated?—There will.

Change in system of farming.

8732. And you cannot suggest to the Commission, I gather, any change of system in farming or any alterations in legislation which are at all likely to restore the position?—I think that I did make a slight suggestion as to the system of farming, in so far as I thought that if the temporary pasture rotation were introduced it would be advantageous.

8733. If it was possible on the bad land, about which you have some doubts?—I have some doubts there. I commented perhaps more strongly than I should have done that the Board of Agriculture might take a part in demonstrating and testing the question as to whether suitable grasses could be found.

Prospects in Essex.

8734. I have only one more question to ask. You wind up with a very emphatic statement after all your inspection in the county, and in paragraph 201 you say, "nor is it at all likely that fresh capital will flow into a "county where land is taxed and rated out of all pro-"portion to its real value, and without fresh capital "Essex, so far as its agriculture is concerned, is lost." Is that your deliberate opinion?—No, sir; I would not like to say that that is my opinion; that is really a summary of the evidence given to me in very strong and positive language. I should not have said such a thing were it not a summary of the evidence given on the point.

8735. (*Chairman.*) I understand that it was not your own opinion?—I rather reserved my own opinion.

8736. You have not given it as your own opinion?—I would not like you to take it so.

8737. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You gave it as the outcome of the evidence before you?—Yes.

8738. *Chairman.*) You do not say it is your own opinion, but it is a summary?—Precisely so.

8739. (*Mr. Lambert.*) As to the portion in Essex that you have reported on, is that the worst portion of the county?—Yes, to the east of the Great Eastern Railway is undoubtedly the worst.

8740. So you have reported on the worst portion of the county?—And perhaps the best too.

8741. But the conditions are not so disastrous in the best portions as in the worst?—Nothing like it.

8742. In paragraph 92 I see a farm has been out of cultivation for 15 years; that would be during the time of high prices, would it not?—1879 was a wet season.

Land out of cultivation.

8743. Yes, but the prices were not then so depressed as now?—They were not so bad.

8744. Have you reckoned such land as has been out of cultivation 15 years in the category of the land given us?—This particular farm is marked "out of cultivation" in these maps.

8745. Are there a great many other farms of the same description that have been out of cultivation 15 years or something like that—I mean to say that have not been thrown out of cultivation owing to the late bad seasons?—There was a great acreage of land that went out of cultivation in consequence of the season of 1879.

8746. And a large portion of this land has not gone out of cultivation owing to the recent seasons and prices?—It has gone out owing to the depression of agriculture which has existed since 1879.

8747. But not owing to the depression which has existed recently?—Any amount of it has gone out of cultivation within recent years.

8748. Could you give any proportion?—I could not because it is very difficult. From practical experience I could tell you of land that has tumbled down within the last three years, but I would not like to say that I could discriminate any further.

Unoccupied farms.

8749. You say that in 1893 there were fewer unoccupied farms than in 1886?—Unoccupied.

8750. But I presume an unoccupied farm would mean a cultivated one?—No, I was over plenty of uncultivated land that was occupied at perhaps 10*l.* for 600 acres. That land was occupied, but it was not cultivated.

Tithe.

8751. In paragraph 44 you say the rent is 1*l.* per annum, the tenant paying tithe, 140*l.* a year. I thought under the recent Tithe Act, if the tithe was two-thirds of the annual value, it should be reduced?—Yes.

8752. How is it that they have to pay 140*l.* for tithe and 1*l.* a year rent?—If he appealed under section 8 of the Act he would get a remission.

8753. How could that be if the annual value is only 1*l.*?—The annual value is the actual rent plus the tithe. The present value of the tithe on this farm is 140*l.*, the rent is 1*l.*, and the total annual value under Schedule B. is 141*l.*; two-thirds of 141*l.* is 94*l.*, consequently there could be a remission of 47*l.* under section 8 of the Tithe Act on this farm.

8754. (*Mr. Elton.*) But the tenant pays the tithe as well as the 1*l.* rent?—Yes, the tenant pays the tithes.

8755. To the landlord?—Yes, I should presume so.

8756. He pays his landlord the amount of the tithe plus 1*l.* for himself?—I would not like to say that is so in this individual case. There are a great many instances in which the tenant still pays to the tithe-owner; but under the Act he should pay to the landlord.

8757. (*Mr. Lambert.*) In paragraph 115 you say:—"Some farmers have made a little headway." On what kind of land would that be?—I see you refer to a Lancashire man?—I was over half of that Lancashire man's farm; there was a bit of it very strong, near Chelmsford particularly strong, and that was in three years grass. The pasture was not very good, but still it paid the rent. There was another piece on fair mixed soil under the plough.

8758. Do you think that these conditions could be applied to other portions of the county?—A great deal more than at present.

Small farmers and large farmers compared.

8759. You concluded that the small farmers were suffering more than the large, that was the summary of your Report?—It was so far as I saw them and heard of them.

8760. Would the rent and conditions of the tenancies be the same in small holdings as in the large?—I think there was not anything in the rent.

Competition for farms.

8761. In paragraph 116 you say there was a rush for small farms some years ago?—Yes, that is the evidence; I was told that.

8762. Owing to that rush was there a fictitious value given to those farms?—Probably there was, it took place before I went.

Dairying.

8763. You say that there should be an increase in dairying, or you think so; that is your opinion in some parts of it?—I think I qualified that afterwards in the last paragraph; I thought that an increase of output of milk would be disastrous.

8764. You do not think that there is any opening for the increase of dairying?—Dairying could be increased, of course it could, but I am not sure that it would be very good for those who were engaged in it, unless it took the form of butter and cheese manufacture.

Buildings.

8765. And you also state that upon a great many farms the buildings are not what they should be?—They are inferior.

8766. And in the days of fairly high rents the buildings were not kept up in the condition that they should have been?—Not to my eye.

8767. And the Essex farmers have little knowledge of grass?—That is exactly what my Report says.

8768. That would intimate that the Essex farmers do not understand the rotation which is practised by the Scotch farmers?—I do not think that they are grass farmers.

Fruit growing.

8769. Do you think that there are any openings for fruit growing in Essex?—I saw some fruit trees in the three-horse land, but they appeared to me to be dying off. I inquired into the matter, and I was informed that the tendency of fruit trees in these stiff lands was to rather die off at the roots, consequently I formed the opinion that on the stiff lands fruit-growing, so far as orchards were concerned, could hardly be extended profitably. Upon the mixed soils I have no doubt that berry bushes might be grown very largely.

Poultry farming.

8770. Would there be an opening for poultry farming?—I think there is a good opening, and poultry farming has been immensely increased of late years.

8771. So that if that kind of farming were carried on that would be an inducement to the small holders to remain upon the land?—Yes; I think it might be made a great deal of.

Dairying.

8772. Do I understand this point: that dairy produce could be produced in Essex, but that you are afraid there would be no market for it?—That is just exactly my point. There is no doubt the dairy farming might be extended, but I do not see that the sale of milk could be profitably extended. This was very prominently put before me.

8773. (*Mr. Channing.*) If it were made universal the supply would exceed the demand, would it not?—That is it.

The Agricultural Holdings Act. Counter-claims.

8774. (*Mr. Lambert.*) In paragraph 156 you say that some counter-claims under the Agricultural Holdings Act are sometimes oppressive. Were any instances brought before you of that?—Yes; there was one instance brought before me of a case where a tenant had spent a very considerable sum of money—a large sum of money—and where he had infringed the lease somehow or another. He made a claim under the Agricultural Holdings Act, and his claim was entirely annihilated by the counter-claim on the part of the landlord.

8775. Do you consider it an unjust counter-claim, or was the case not stated to you?—I had no means of forming an opinion. It apparently took place some years ago. I recollect the case myself, I was interested in these matters, and I knew that he had laid out a good deal of money on the land, but I never saw his lease, and I do not know what clause he broke, or anything about it.

Security for tenants' improvements.

8776. Is there a desire for better security to the sitting tenant?—There appears to be from the evidence brought before me at meetings and in private.

Arbitration courts.

8777. I notice that at Braintree it was carried *nem. con.* that it was desirable that arbitration courts should be established by the Legislature as soon as possible?—That was one of the resolutions.

8778. And what would those Arbitration Courts mean?—I do not know.

8779. What would they be established for?—Will you kindly refer me to the paragraph?

8780. Paragraph 158, page 70?—To settle disputes between the landlord and tenant, generally speaking.

8781. Would that include the fixing of rent?—I think so, undoubtedly; that was covered by the resolution.

8782. Do you think it would be desirable, judging from what you have seen?—I have not an opinion upon the point.

8783. But you thought there was a desire amongst those farmers that there should be a court established for the fixing of rents?—I did; more than that, I say so, because at every meeting, except one, it formed the subject of a resolution.

8784. How many meetings did you hold?—Four.

8785. And at three out of the four the farmers were in favour of a court for the fixing of rents?—They were.

8786. Was it the opinion of the farmers that it would be desirable to give the sitting tenant the prior right of having the sporting rights?—It was very distinctly expressed that it would, but I must say this, that there were only two estates where there was any complaint at all about flying game, and those were in cases—I think I say it in the Report—in which there were shooting tenants, and it was from the tenants of those estates that this matter was mentioned.

8787. (*Chairman.*) You found that where a disagreement arose they were shooting tenants?—Yes.

Ground Game Act.

8788. (*Mr. Lambert.*) And upon the subject of ground game did you find the farmers in favour of facilities for killing the ground game?—I had no reason for supposing that the ground game was a grievance at all.

8789. They had full facilities for killing them?—Yes, under the Ground Game Act.

8790. But the farmer's right to kill them has been extended?—It was extended by the Act as far as necessary, but there has been no oppression as far as the evidence went.

8791. (*Mr. Channing.*) The maps that you have shown us which are of great value have been marked as regards unoccupied fields locally I understand?—Just locally, from parishes taken here and there.

8792. But not by local persons?—Oh, yes. The Maldon map was marked by Mr. Fitch, the Chairman of the Board of Guardians, and Mr. Freeman, the Clerk of the Union. The Billericay map was done by Mr. Coverdale, Lord Petre's agent, assisted by two or three other gentlemen. The Chelmsford map was done by Mr. Coverdale also, and Mr. Lawrence Marriage and Mr. Offin, and the Rochford map by Mr. Offin and Mr. Lawrence Marriage.

8793. Would there be any difficulty in getting the maps completed?—I think not. It might be necessary to find a little £ *s. d.*

8794. Then it would not involve a visit by yourself to the county again?—I would like to go myself.

Land out of cultivation.

8795. I asked you that question with a view of asking you another to clear up a point about which Mr. Lambert put a question; what precisely are we to understand by those uncultivated fields; they are fields which in many cases are occupied?—By stock, as summer grazing. These uncultivated lands were formerly under rotation and are now under no rotation at all but under grass, good, bad, or indifferent.

8796. Would they be returned in the "cultivated area" to the Board of Agriculture in the Agricultural Return?—I think they would be returned as either temporary pasture or probably permanent pasture after lying a certain time.

8797. Then with regard to the six or seven years rotation in these temporary grasses that you are recommending, I want to ask you whether the feeling among landlords and agents is to allow them any agreement, or whether tenants have the slightest difficulty in obtaining the land under those terms?—There is not a single landlord or agent that I spoke to but would have been delighted to give tenants all and full facilities that would be anything to their advantage in this connexion.

8798. You referred to one Lancashire tenant?—Yes; I was talking to Mr. Lambert about him just now.

Rent.

8799. Are you aware of the rent paid on that farm for a long number of years previous?—I think it is given.

8800. I have in my hand the report of a Lancashire Tenant Farmers' Committee, who inspected this farm, and the rent is given previous to Mr. Lofthouse being there. The old rent was at 450*l.* a year for two terms of 14 years, in addition to a tithe paid by the tenant, 98*l.*, equal to a total of 548*l.*, and those terms were paid up to 1885. Is that consistent with the facts within your knowledge?—I got them from Mr. Hilliard, the agent on the estate, and I talked to Mr. Lofthouse, and I got from him the particulars of the rent, and it fits in exactly with what you say.

8801. The rent paid by Mr. Lofthouse is 150*l.*?—That is the figure.

8802. Do you think he will get on with the farm at that rent? Have you formed a favourable opinion of his bargain?—I was over it, and I thought the man would do if he did not grow wheat.

8803. He was working it with his family?—He had a large family at work.

8804. And with the temporary grass system, the Scotch system?—Yes.

8805. Were there any other Lancashire farmers there?—I saw no other Lancashire farmers.

8806. Can you tell me anything about the remissions of rent made to the former tenant, to Mr. Dewar? Is it within your knowledge whether he actually paid this total of 548*l.* down to 1885, or whether the rent was nominally that sum, and he had large remissions from it?—I have no information upon the point. I have got Mr. Lofthouse's evidence before me. I see the acreage of the farm is 364 acres.

8807. Did you see the old tenant when you were there?—I saw Mr. Lofthouse. I did not see the old tenant.

8808. You are not aware of his statements?—No, I did not see the old tenant.

Reductions and abatements of rent.

8809. Did you form any impression (I do not know whether it is stated in your Report), as to the remissions of rent or abatements of rent, or whether if they had been made earlier in the period of depression they would have helped the old tenants to get over their difficulty?—Do you mean generally speaking?

8810. Yes; whether you have formed any opinion that the abatements came rather late in the day?—The abatements dated back to 1879. They began then, and there were large abatements and reductions and remissions given regularly all through. No doubt if they had had bigger abatements and bigger reductions it would have helped; but I would not say that the landlord had stood in the light of his tenants.

8811. Have you any cases of leaseholds as late as 1885?—Some.

8812. In these farms, perhaps, the abatements were not made so freely?—I could not say that I have heard any complaints of that.

Equipment of farms.

8813. You have given very strong evidence in your Report as to the want of equipment of the farms?—Yes, I did put it very strongly in my Report.

8814. And that a sufficient return of capital was not made in the good times?—Yes.

Security for tenants' improvements.

8815. Mr. Lambert put a question to you about security to the sitting tenant, and I suppose what I am to understand from your Report is this, that there was a very strong wish expressed by many of the tenant farmers to have security for their improvements, and to have their farms at a fair rent?—That is exactly it.

8816.—That is the thing that would allow them the enjoyment and the full results of their labour?—The enjoyment. They apparently held that the enjoyment of one's own improvements was of greater value than any compensation that could be got by Act of Parliament.

Cross-cropping.

8817. There was one passage in your Report which refers to cross-cropping, as being winked at by the agents. Did you have evidence on that point?—I had no specimen brought forward, but it was frequently referred to.

8818. And that they allowed things to go on, and when the tenants made a complaint it would be brought up?—It was there to be brought up.

Freedom of cultivation.

8819. Was there a strong expression of opinion as to freedom of cultivation so long as a man is responsible for the ultimate result?—There was no expression of opinion because, I believe, that they have got it. The Essex farmer can cultivate as he likes; there is no exception, excepting with respect to the last two years of a tenancy.

8820. Am I right in understanding from that passage that there is a feeling that although they cultivate as they like, if they wanted to put money into their farms, any substantial outlay into their farms, they would not be safe were the cross-cropping a breach of covenant?—Probably he would run a risk, and there might be something heard about the cross-cropping in the event of a claim. That is the evidence given to me.

8821. Would freedom of cultivation and valuation of the ultimate results to both sides, efficient covenants and fair rents, tend, in your opinion, to make the farmers put more capital into the land?—I think it would undoubtedly do away with what they consider a grievance, as stated to me. It would prevent the bringing in or raking up of cross-cropping.

8822. I cannot put my hand upon that in your Report, but my impression is that you say that the sense of insecurity does diminish the motive to put money into the farms in Essex?—It is in the 158th paragraph.

The Agricultural Holdings Act. Valuation.

8823. That seems general in that sense. I will not ask you anything further on that point. You referred to the practice of valuers, not to state items in their award in respect of which they award compensation?—The different figures are given.

8824. You are of course aware that that is inconsistent with section 19 of the Agricultural Holdings Act, which requires them to do so?—I respectfully beg to differ from you. I do not think that the section of the Act binds. Take the instance of a muck heap. They do not give the measurement in their awards, and they do not say how much per cubic yard, and the Act does not bind them to do so.

8825. "The sum awarded in respect of each improvement, act, matter, and thing," that is sub-section (c) of that section?—The farmer wants fuller particulars.

8826. They are not allowed to give general compensation, but to give compensation according to the items generally?—Yes, the farmers appear to want to know how much per ton for their hay, and how much hay is being sold and everything, just the same as the account you get from the grocer.

8827. What I want to know is whether valuers do not take the matter into their own hands as regards procedure under the Act?—The evidence is undoubtedly to the effect that the valuers take the matter pretty much into their own hands.

8828. They form their own time scale, lump the exhaustion, and they apply that without very much consideration of whether the work or improvements have been carried out well or ill?—Yes.

8829. That is one defect in the practice of valuers?—Essex farmers think so.

Subdivision of farms.

8830. You say that some of the moderate sized farmers have got on—those who work with their families have got on tolerably well, and those who do the work with their hands have got on fairly well, and managed to make a rent after a fashion. At the same time, in another part of your Report, you say there is a great reluctance to break up large farms to make smaller holdings. But if this greater security and continuing at a fair rent was to hold good, would not the farmers be more willing to press the landlord for those moderate sized farms, and would there not be more willingness to carry them out?—I think it would have that tendency.

Buildings and drainage.

8831. You attribute in your concluding remarks a considerable share of the distress in Essex to improper farm buildings and want of drainage?—Yes, the buildings are very bad, and I think the farmers are severely handicapped, and there is a great deal that requires draining and cannot be properly cultivated until it is drained.

State loans for improvements.

8832. Can you say whether loans could be usefully made at low terms to Essex landowners with a view to improving the building and equipment and drainage and so on?—I think I recommended in the Report that it should be so. Perhaps I do it in the name of the Essex farmers, but it was very generally spoken of, and I think that it is desirable.

8833. Do you think that it is practicable?—I do.

Scotch farmers in Essex.

8834. (*Mr. Everett.*) The Scotch farming in Essex may be roughly summarised as the minimum of employment of labour, and the minimum production, may it not?—Yes, I think that is a very fair description.

8835. These Scotch farmers come from one district in Scotland?—Chiefly from the west country and south-west country.

8836. Did you get any idea why it is that only one district of Scotland has sent emigrants into Essex and the Eastern counties?—As far as I could gather it was the rents. I know that part of Scotland pretty well, though not as well as the east, but the rents are high there, and there is great competition for land, and the leases seem to be rather strong in their clauses. It is poor soil in the west part of Scotland as a rule. I think putting all these together you get the reasons for bringing them south.

Characteristics of Essex land.

8837. (*Mr. Elton.*) I understood you to say that Essex is divided into three grades of soil. I know Essex a little. Were you in the worst or in the first, second, or third grade? There is high land; were you there?—No, I was in mixed soil. You can hardly make subdivisions of soil in the three-horse land.

8838. But there is a part, and that the highest part, about which you do not give evidence?—I was not there.

8839. Do you think that the land that you were in had exhausted all its growing properties?—No, I would not say that. I should rather expect it is difficult to exhaust it and to keep it clean, but a great deal of the land was very foul.

8840. You thought that it was not making good pasture land?—I think it would not; it was hardly grass land.

8841. Do you recollect the wheat and beans ground which is now used for pasture in the Vale of Aylesbury?—I have never been in the Vale. I have been very near it, but I have never been in it.

8842. I wanted to get your opinion about that again definitely. You say the strong clay soil is not good for fruit?—I know very little about fruit, and I saw so very little in strong soil that my opinion would not be worth much.

8843. There may be a possible exception as to lias soils—clays?—There may be.

8844. There is, because the best apples and pears are grown on that?—I do not doubt the point.

8845. Did you find any fancy seeds, like canary seeds and so on, grown extensively?—Yes, up near Braintree.

8846. Is that a good fruit place?—I think so.

8847. Is there a tendency for it to increase again; you know there was a great deal at one time?—In turnip seed growing and mangold seed growing there is rather an increase; but I think that fancy seeds are rather on the decline.

Tithe.

8848. When the farmers used to talk about tithe, did you not find that where they paid the tithe they took it as not part of the annual value, but as a separate thing; they considered that if they paid 50*l.* tithe, and 1*l.* rent, they called the annual value 1*l.* and not the 50*l.*?—I cannot call to recollection any tenant talking about annual value; they just told me the rent and the tithe too.

8849. At any rate they have not got to pay the tithe by the Act?—They talked about so much rent and so much tithe, my note book is full of that.

8850. They kept the tithe separate as being paid by the landlord?—They do not jumble it up with the rent.

8851. They do not take it as part of the annual value?—They do not.

8852. Their complaints mentioned in your Report may be read with that explanation?—I think so.

Area of Essex reported upon.

8853. (*Lord Vernon.*) About what is the acreage of the land over which the Report you made is spread?—I should think somewhere over 200,000 acres.

8854. That is about a quarter of the whole of Essex?—I think perhaps it would be more than a quarter.

8855. Is it the worst part of Essex?—Undoubtedly the Eastern Division to which my Report refers is the worst part of Essex.

8856. May we practically understand that the land that you class as land out of cultivation is really very inferior land?—It is not inferior land for a certain system of farming; it is very superior land for wheat and beans, but it is inferior at present prices.

8857. Do you think that a certain portion of it would not have been brought into cultivation unless it had been unduly stimulated by high protective duties?—I should need to go back a long time for that.

8858. Not such a very great while?—It is natural to suppose that wheat growing land many years ago was rather successfully cultivated there.

8859. (*Chairman.*) This land has suffered from going out of the cultivation of wheat?—That is so.

Land tax.

8860. (*Lord Vernon.*) One question about the Land Tax. I see that on page 77 of your Report you have got Essex down in 1798 as being assessed for Land Tax at 88,647*l.* as against a county like Westmoreland at 3,000*l.* That is an enormous difference. Now the amount redeemed and exonerated since 1798, although put down at 50,000*l.*, is, under the present quota, put down at 38,000*l.* That is so enormously different from any other county that I shall be glad to have your explanation?—That is the Return of the Land Tax, which the Secretary got for me.

8861. (*Chairman.*) For some reason or other Essex is very heavily burdened with Land Tax?—Apparently so.

8862. (*Lord Vernon.*) How would it be fixed?—100 years ago Essex land was undoubtedly worth a very considerable rent, perhaps double as much rent as many counties which are now worth a great deal more than Essex.

Successful farmers.

8863. (*Chairman.*) I should like you to turn to the balance sheet of that farm in Appendix C., at page 91. You there give a balance sheet of a farm of 950 acres. Whereabouts was that farm?—Half way between Ongar and Chelmsford.

8864. What quality of soil is it?—Mixed soil; a good deal of stiffish soil; but not three-horse soil.

8865. Is it goodish clay?—Yes.

8866. May it be taken as a fair average of Essex land, other than the very worst?—It is a fair average of the quality of the land; but extremely well farmed.

8867. You went over that farm?—I rode over it.

8868. Is it farmed by a tenant farmer, or by the owner?—It is farmed by a tenant farmer; I will give you the name, but I would not like it taken down.

8869. You say that this is well farmed?—Admirably farmed.

8870. If you give the net results of the farm for 14 years there has been a profit of 400*l.*, which represents 3 per cent. upon the capital. Now, if you will take the last six years you will find that the profits have averaged 740*l* a year?—Yes.

8871. And that since the earlier years, which include some bad years following 1879, the rent has been reduced from 1,184*l.* a year to 741*l.* a year?—Yes.

8872. Therefore the last six years have had the benefit of the reduction of rent from 1,180*l.* a year to 740*l.*, and with that reduction the profits have been 740*l.* a year, or about 6 per cent. upon the capital. That is the result, I think?—Yes.

8873. Apparently two-thirds of the farm is arable, and one-third pasture?—Yes.

8874. And the wages appear to amount to about 2*l.* per acre?—That is about it.

8875. The rates amount to 3*s.* per acre, the tithe to 3*s.* 6*d.*, and the Land Tax to 2*s.*, making the total charges of that kind 8*s.* 6*d.* per acre?—Yes.

8876. Judging from that do you think it is possible that other land of the same kind may be farmed to the same advantage, because 6 per cent. upon the capital during the last six years does not seem to be a bad return?—Quite so. This gentleman, as I explained in paragraph 109, is an expert. He has a very large capital, as you will see from the books, and he is rather a model man altogether.

8877. But you told me at the beginning of your evidence that you did not know of any case where anyone had done well, other than the Scotch farmers; but this would seem to be a case where the man has done fairly well by applying considerable skill to it, as you see, and being an expert?—In answering your question I was not taking the last six years out, but referring to the accounts as a whole.

8878. What I have to point out is that the earlier years of the 14 years were burdened with heavy rent; the rent was reduced in 1886 from 1,180*l.* to 740*l.*, and since then he has had the advantage of that reduction, and if you take the average of the last six years you will find an average profit of 740*l.* a year?—But in these accounts I have charged no interest upon capital, and nothing for management.

8879. That works out 6 per cent. on his capital?—I am sorry that I said anything of the figure, since his rent has been reduced, he is a better man to that extent.

8880. You are speaking of a farm which is still an arable farm?—There has been some slight increase of pasture land on this farm.

8881. But still, in the main, it is an arable farm?—Yes.

8882. But it seems to have been worked on the principle of making his profit partly out of milk, and partly out of live stock, and partly out of the sale of hay?—By adopting a mixed process of farming; by the sale of corn, barley, milk, and partly by the sale of hay, he has succeeded in making a fair profit during the last six years, with the reduction of rent. I do not think that the farmer in question would exactly like to have his profit called a fair profit.

8883. It is 6 per cent.?—Yes.

8884. And besides that he has lived in his house, and paid no rent for his house?—He pays rent for his house with the farm.

8885. He has lived rent free?—Yes.

8886. And he has made 6 per cent. upon his capital?—He has got nothing for his time though.

8887. Do you say that 6 per cent. is not such a return as a man ought to expect?—No, I think that a farmer is entitled to more.

8888. If entitled to more there is still a margin of rent from which to draw?—Yes.

8889. Supposing he now pays 740*l.* rent, and supposing, instead of being entitled to 6 per cent. upon his capital, he ought to expect 8 or 10 per cent., is there not still a margin of rent from which to draw?—Yes, if there were another reduction he would be so much the better off.

8890. If he continues at 740*l.* a year one may presume that he is satisfied; at all events he is content to go on paying that rent?—I do not think that he would like to see anybody else in that farm.

8891. Then, on the whole, he is fairly content with the conditions?—I cannot go that length.

8892. He is content to go on paying that rent?—Yes. This gentleman was good enough to give me the whole of his books, which were carefully kept, and I made them up in the office, and he came down and went over them with me.

8893. But am I not substantially correct when I say that these accounts show that his rent has been reduced from 1,180*l.*, or thereabouts, to 740*l.*?—Yes.

8894. And that he is still paying at the rate of 16*s.* per acre, or 740*l.* a year?—Yes.

8895. And therefore if he is not satisfied with his position, and if no other people are likely to take the farm at the same rent, he would probably get a reduction?—There is room for it.

8896. And if he is not making enough interest for his capital, a reduction of rent would make up the difference?—Pardon me; there are two or three farms together. One of these farms was taken in 1865; the rent was 660*l.*, and on the tithe there was a reduction of 125*l.*, on that one farm of 500 acres.

8897. You need not go into details, but substantially I am right, am I not, there is a considerable reduction, but even with the reduction he is paying 16*s.* per acre, and if his interest is not sufficient to enable him to live as a farmer, there is a margin for him to draw upon?—I think so.

8898. Do you think that others in the neighbourhood might not do as well?—I am very far from saying that a reduction of rent would not benefit Essex generally.

8899. But looking at the whole position, might not others do as well as that farmer is doing?—No, he is not an ordinary man at all.

8900. Why is not he an ordinary man?—If you look at those tables on page 56 which are abstracted from these accounts, you will see that the total of sales per acre on this farm were in 1891 and 1892 14*l.* 18*s.* 5*d.* and stock purchased per acre 5*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.*, and the feeding stuffs and manures per acre 3*l.* 5*s.* 8*d.*, these are enormous figures.

8901. That rather tends to show that by the application of a large amount of capital he is enabled to weather the storm?—But do not forget his head piece; he is a splendid fellow.

8902. He supplied talent to the concern, and the result is that it is not a bad one, even in bad times?—If you could get a lot of men like this gentleman with money and brains and activity and energy and steadiness, they would hold out better than others.

8903. It is not a case of holding out, but he has done fairly well, and if he is not satisfied with his position he has something to draw upon; that is the case of the arable farm. Now the next case is that of the Scotch farmer. He has taken a farm of 636 acres and farmed it on a different principle, namely, he has allowed it to go into grass and is employing as little labour as he can. Here is a case of 636 acres; 71 acres now is arable; 318 is old pasture, and 247 is temporary pasture; is that what you would call land gone out of cultivation?—No.

8904. It is not what you would call gone out of cultivation?—No, that would be broken up again.

8905. This gentleman appears to have reduced his wages paid per acre from 2*l.* an acre paid by the last farmer to something under 1*l.*, considerably less than the others?—His wages in 1892 and 1893 were 13*s.* 3*d.* per week, threshing included.

8906. And the result of his operations has been that on the four years average he has made a profit of 12½ per cent. on his capital. He has done fairly well?—He has done fairly well.

8907. He has lived in the farmhouse free, and probably he and his family have lived there too. He has done fairly well?—Yes.

8908. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Has he employed his family?—He has two children, but they are very small ones.

8909. (*Chairman.*) Is there any reason why others should not do as well as he has done?—The same reason as the farm referred to in Appendix C 1. He is head and shoulders above others, he is an extremely clever man.

8910. Then it is still possible for a clever man to make money out of it?—I think some men will float while others sink, and you have got two specimens.

8911. It would seem that the average produce per acre is not very low, it is varying from 6*l.* to 6*l.* 13*s.* an acre?—This is a dairy farm.

Arbitration courts.

8912. Now you have stated in answer to one of the questions put to you that the farmers were desirous of arbitration on rent. You say at paragraph 158, "Before "consenting to the adoption of these resolutions several "farmers submitted that Arbitration Courts for the "fixing of fair rents should be optional, and not compulsory?"—Yes.

8913. Did you understand what they meant by that?—I did. It arose in this way. The farmers were discussing the Irish Land Act. There was a resolution brought forward absolutely naming the advantages that were being extended to the Irish tenant farmers; I took no part in the discussion except to clear away a point. A large number of the farmers seemed to think that the Irish Land Act was compulsory, that you were bound to go into Court without attempting to come to any agreement with the landlord, and the matter was referred to me. I produced the Irish Land Act, and read them the clause which deals with the point. Then when they saw that the Irish Land Act was not comcompulsory, those who previously objected altered their opinions.

8914. Did they know that the landlord might go into Court as well as the tenant?—They did.

8915. Would they be content with the landlord here going into Court?—I made it very plain.

8916. To fix the rent for seven years?—The term of years did not arise; they did not mention it, 15 years is the judicial term in the Irish Land Act. They affirmed the principle, and I think on several occasions they did say that there ought to be re-valuation at seven years, they thought that 15 years was too long.

8917. Did they discuss the question as to what would have happened if they had had judicial rents some years ago, and the falling rents of the last few years?—I do not think that that was taken into consideration; it was the principle that they were desirous of putting before me.

Fixity of tenure.

8918. Did they understand by that fixity of tenure as well as arbitration on rents?—I think they were rather stronger upon the fixity of tenure than upon the fixing of rents.

8919. That they should be given by the Legislature an absolute interest in their holdings and be irremovable?—Yes, as being superior to the Agricultural Holdings Act they contrasted the two.

8920. They considered that a man who took his farm a year or two ago should be entitled to remain there for ever?—I think with a fair rent they did; that is to say that he should not be put out of it.

8921. That is the same thing?—Yes, it is very much the same thing.

8922. He cannot be put out, and if he is entitled to a judicial rent he is entitled to a fixity of tenure for ever?—Yes.

8923. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Who were these gentlemen of whom you have been recently speaking, those tenant farmers?—There was one meeting where the matter was brought forward and there were 280 farmers there.

8924. In what neighbourhood?—That was at Braintree.

8925. Were they representative farmers?—I should think so.

Landlords and tenants.

8926. Is not there one part of your Report in which you state that the farmers whom you met said that the landlords had behaved very fairly in respect of rents, and there was a most friendly feeling between them?—Decidedly.

Successful farmers.

8927. (*Mr. Little.*) Are not those two gentlemen you have spoken of exceptional men?—Very exceptional men.

8928. In abilities and in command of capital?—In both of those respects undoubtedly.

8929. Would you not think that exceptional men would be entitled to something more than average profits?—Certainly so.

8930. And the prizes of the profession generally go to the exceptionally clever?—There is no good in being exceptionally clever if you do not get something for it.

8931. The profits of 6 per cent. and 12½ per cent. for those exceptionally clever men farming under the greatest advantages, do not seem to you a fair commercial profit?—I think that the 12½ per cent. is a fair profit.

8932. What does it amount to in a year at 12½ per cent.?—I think it is about 1*l.* an acre profit.

8933. About 600*l.* a year?—Yes.

8934. Considering that there are many thousand pounds invested, is 600*l.* a year any great prize for the best man?—No, it is not; and in the other case, I think that it is a very poor profit.

8935. The farmer, referred to in Appendix C. 1., is not only an extremely good judge of stock, but he has the capital to keep a very large quantity?—Enormous quantities. I never had to deal with such large figures on the same area. I saw a large number of cattle on these farms, this man goes into market and picks up three parts fat beasts, and brings them home, and keeps them for a month or so, and finishes them off. It is not every man who could find the capital for that.

8936. It is not every man who has the capital and the skill to do it?—No.

8937. (*Viscount Cobham.*) It is only 435*l.*, not 600*l.*?—Yes.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

Seventeenth Day.

At 23, Great George Street, Westminster, S.W., Friday, 23rd February, 1894.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW LEFEVRE, M.P., in the CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
Captain OWEN-THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
WALTER HUME LONG, Esq., M.P.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
FREEMAN THOMAS, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. R. H. Pringle.

23 Feb. 1894.

Mr. R. HUNTER PRINGLE re-called and further examined.

Condition of farmers in Isle of Axholme.

8938. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I wish to ask you a few questions upon your Isle of Axholme Report. It is very melancholy reading. You say that on the whole, financially speaking, the position in Axholme is as bad as in Essex ?—I think it would be impossible to compare the two, because the land in the Isle of Axholme is useful workable land.

8939. But I mean with regard to the financial position of the actual cultivators of the soil at the present moment ?—The one is just as bad as the other, but from different causes.

8940. On page 19 of your report you give us the effect of the depression on various classes. You state that the heavily burdened freeholder has suffered the most, and his position is very bad indeed, and in many cases hopeless. You make a distinction, then, between the freeholder and the renter of land ?—Yes.

Mortgaged freeholds and tenancies compared.

8941. You consider that the position of the freeholder is worse than that of the renter ?—Yes, I do.

8942. Owing, I presume, to the inelastic nature of the engagements that he has entered into ?—Just so. The fact is, that the freeholder who has mortgaged does not get the same remissions from the persons to whom he has to pay interest that the tenant farmer does.

8943. Not merely that, but as I gather from other parts of your evidence he has actually to pay more in interest than what would be considered a fair rent ?—I should think, probably, in a great many cases that I looked into, he has to pay double as much as would be a fair rent.

Arrears on mortgages.

8944. As to the arrears, they are not written off ?—I think not, I think they accumulate.

8945. Is it your opinion that any farmer in any part of the country who is labouring under a heavy burden of arrears is practically in a hopeless position ?—At any time it is a very severe weight upon a person, but particularly in times such as these.

8946. The lenders of money in many cases in the Isle of Axholme are hardly in a position to write off arrears, I suppose ?—I could not say that. I did meet with one gentleman who was very largely interested in the matter as a solicitor. He had a great deal of money out both of his own and of his clients, and I could see no disposition on his part to write off anything, and he rather discountenanced the idea when any little hints of that kind were made.

8947. If it were possible it would be a great advantage if the arrears were written off ?—It would be of immense advantage.

Condition of large tenant farmers.

8948. Then the second class that has suffered next heavily is the large tenant class. You say, "The "tenant who took land without adequate capital, has "neglected it, cannot stock it, is heavily behind with "his rent, and in debt to various tradesmen." That I suppose is generally applicable ?—Yes. I saw over two farms which exactly answered that description. They were hopeless.

Condition of occupiers owning part and renting part of their farms.

8949. The third class that has suffered in your opinion are the "farmers of 30 to 70 acres who own "part and rent part, and who have their freeholds "either clear, or nearly clear of debt." I presume those are comparatively very few in number ?—Not many.

8950. Should you say that if they took steps to get rid of their land at the earliest possible moment they would probably put themselves in a better financial position ?—I do not quite understand the question.

8951. You say some are partly tenants and partly freeholders ? — Partly freeholders and partly rent holders.

8952. Would they be better off if they ceased to be freeholders ?—Yes, provided that the acreage was not reduced below a workable size, that is, supposing that a man retained at least 40 acres.

8953. You consider that 40 acres is about the minimum that can be cultivated with a profit ?—On the fine land of Axholme, 40 acres would be a suitable holding. Anything less would, in my opinion, be too small.

Condition of small holders.

8954. We have been told frequently that small holdings are the most profitably cultivated by those who are half farmers or half labourers, or who have other strings to their bow. Do you find that to be the case in Axholme ?—Yes.

8955. Are there a good many of that class ?—Yes, and I think an increasing number.

8956. Are there many small tradesmen, as well as jobbing labourers and others ?—There are not so many small dealers in that country.

8957. Dealers in farm produce ?—Not stock; there is not much stock kept there, it is potatoes and corn chiefly. I found a comparative absence of small dealers among small holders. I have had some experience in small holdings, and one generally finds a good many jobbers, but not so many in Axholme as I have found in other places.

8958. They have to work immensely hard, I presume ? —I think very hard at certain seasons; but taking the life of one of these small holders in Axholme all the year round I do not think that it is as hard as the agricultural labourer's.

8959. But speaking of those who are agricultural labourers at the same time, they are half labourers and they have a hard life ?—Yes; I am sure of it.

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8960. Then you say, "The large and good farmers "with useful land at a fair rent, sufficient capital, "and of extensive, intelligent, and enterprising mind, "and good business habits," they are "holding their own"?—They are doing better than any of the other classes.

8961. I presume that that applies, unfortunately, to very few?—Very few. In the northern part of the Isle of Axholme you get rather out of the small freeholders, and into larger ones. It is magnificent land, it is warp land,—the whole of the land is artificially made by the flooding of the Trent.

8962. Is the land generally going into somewhat larger holdings?—No, I do not think so; I think that it is remaining about the same.

8963. When a small piece of land is given up, it is bought up by another small freeholder?—There is a great deal of cutting up, but this is a cutting up and handing over to other smaller men; but it is putting the land together again.

8964. The large landowners are not buying up the small holders, are they?—No.

8965. There is no tendency to aggregation?—There is no tendency in that way.

Quality of soil.

8966. Do you lay stress upon the quality of the land as affecting the position of the cultivators, and do you say that those who cultivate the best land are, on the whole, the best off, notwithstanding their heavier burdens?—The best land that I saw in the hands of small holders was rather near the Trent. That is the better warp; the nearer the river the better the warp. Of course they pay more for their land. One hundred and twenty pounds per acre was frequently paid for that class of land in former times, and the interest at 5 per cent. on that purchase money forms a very heavy rent. The further you get away from the Trent the warp is lighter, and the rent is less; but I could not exactly say what it is. I would not like to say that away from the Trent they were doing any worse than near the Trent. Those who rent the best soil are, I should say, doing better than those on second rate soil, because the best soil produces more, and at no greater cost of production on labour and manure.

8967. You do not see any marked difference in the holders of different classes of land?—No.

8968. All the land in the Isle, I understand, is fairly good?—Yes; as a rule the land is very good until you get towards the west side of the isle, and then you get into the sandy soil near Hatfield Chase.

8969. You have only been able to give us the accounts of one farm, I believe?—Only one.

8970. I suppose that accounts have been hardly ever kept?—They are hardly ever kept, and I think I mention in my report that those figures were not what I considered reliable. The books were given to me in the rough, and I made them all up to the best of my ability; and it was rather a troublesome business.

Accounts of a representative farm.

8971. Is this a good representative farm that you have selected in Appendix B, page 25? It is 73 acres. I think it was very good soil; it is close to Butterwick.

8972. Is that a rented farm?—Yes.

8973. And that shows a loss in every single year except 1882-3, when it shows a profit of 12*l.* 16*s.* 11*d.*?—I happen to know that that man is 500*l.* in arrears with his rent. They keep back those things; sometimes one has a little difficulty with them.

8974. And the state of things is a great deal worse than is shown in the accounts?—Yes.

8975. (*Mr. Little.*) The rent shown is the rent paid and not the rent due?—It is the rent actually paid, and it varies a good deal in the accounts. I suppose he paid what he could. I remember the property that that is on.

8976. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Was he a farmer pure and simple?—A farmer pure and simple. He had either one or two sons; two, I think, who worked on the place.

8977. At no wages?—No wages. I recollect the evidence was that one of them got 3*d.* a week pocket money.

8978. And this farm of 73 acres is a farm that is as well calculated to pay its way as a farm of any other size, speaking of small holdings?—I consider 73 acres a very nice size, because that is just what would keep a pair of horses, or a pair and a half, going, and that is a very good test of a small holding; just enough to keep a pair of horses busy.

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Prospects of small holders.

8979. Should you say generally, after your experience in the Isle of Axholme, that small holders are not likely to do well in the future; applying your experience to the rest of England, or such parts of England as you know, would you be against the system?—I think, so long as the small holdings have those mortgages over them, that they cannot do well. It is a weight round their necks that they can hardly get rid of.

Small holdings and mortgages.

8980. But is it not your experience that small holders do generally accumulate mortgages on their shoulders?—I do not know how it is in England. I know the small holders of Ireland, and the crofters of Scotland; I know a good deal about them. There certainly does seem to be a tendency, no matter what nationality you take, that small holders get into debt, and they do not seem to feel it the same as large men.

8981. So that the small yeoman farmer of to-day is a person who gets into difficulties?—They generally want bolstering up somehow or other.

8982. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) That would not apply to small occupiers, only to small owners; you intended that?—No, I went further than that.

8983. You think that small occupiers are not doing well generally?—I do not think that they are doing well.

8984. I mean just renting?—I understand. Might I show you one reason why I think they are in the Isle of Axholme; that is an important point, and I have prepared a map to show it.

Expenses of working small holdings.

8985. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is it a map of the whole district?—It is showing how the small holdings are made up; it is all painted in different colours; it is to show the great expense that it must be working those small holdings. They are put together in fields, one field here and another a mile and a half off.

8986. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) While the map is being got ready I might ask you as to Class No. 3; do most of the farmers that you refer to there work themselves: "Farmers of 30 to 70 acres who own part and rent "part and who have their freeholds"?—Yes, I will give you an example of that.

8987. Do they work themselves, and their families too?—On page 19, paragraph 54, I give an example. This farmer works and his son works, and they employ a regular labourer and one boy at harvest and three women for seven months.

8988. Then as to Class No. 4: "The small holder "half a farmer and half a labourer." Of course, they do the whole of the work themselves and their families?—Yes, entirely.

8989. Does the head of the family work as an agricultural labourer at all? I see you say here that when possessed of a horse and cart they earn from 15*l.* to 20*l.* a year for hiring and jobbing?—The man from whom I got that evidence works his holding and when he can get a job he takes it, and he attaches more importance to the job that he gets than to the working of his own land.

8990. Does the class work as agricultural labourers?—When labour can be got; but in that district, of course, they are almost all small freeholds, and labour is very scarce. It is only at odd times that they can get anything to do.

Potato and celery growing.

8991. Does this Class No. 4, which has been fairly successful, adopt any special kind of culture?—Potatoes; a lot of potatoes, and a good many of this Class No. 4 have gone into celery.

8992. Would the soil of the island be suitable to the growing of celery?—It grows magnificent celery. I never saw such celery.

8993. What market does it go to?—All the celery is sold to the manufacturing towns in Yorkshire—Leeds, Huddersfield, Halifax, and Bradford, and all those markets.

8994. Have they any special culture besides celery and potatoes?—Cauliflowers, but the small holders do not grow them, but some of the men who are large holders do. I saw a 40-acre field of cauliflowers; and flax is going out.

Fruit cultivation.

8995. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is there any fruit cultivation?—Yes, a good deal of orchards—apples.

8996. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) And plums?—No, I did not see any plums; there were a great lot of apples.

8997. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Were they well cultivated and well managed orchards?—I think so: the trees seemed to me to be very nicely shaped and very nicely pruned, and it is really a branch of industry.

8998. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Would you say whether these special cultures are increasing in acreage?—Undoubtedly the cultivation of celery is very largely on the increase. I think I have shown that. I got the Agricultural Returns and have put them at page 16, paragraph 35, in my report. In 1882 the acreage under special crops, such as beet-root, cauliflowers, celery, Brussels-sprouts, poppies, &c., was 55½, and in 1892 558¼ acres, or an increase of 502¾ acres in 10 years.

8999. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is not that largely due to one or two large farmers who have lately come in there?—There were two large farmers, and of course a very large proportion would be due to their presence; perhaps of that 502 acres 200 acres might be due to those men. There is, however, a great increase among small farms and on small holdings.

9000. (*Mr. Giffen.*) With regard to this loss upon the farm of 73 acres which you have shown in the Appendix, can you give us from what source the loss was made good; had the tenant got capital to lose?—I was rather puzzled myself with that account. I could not see how the person was going on with that loss; but it was stated that 300*l.* of capital had been put into it by the good lady of the establishment, who had got it some how or other. They kept going on till it was all lost. I know that the landlord has been forced to serve a notice to quit for non-payment of rent and for hopeless accumulations, so that I think you will see that the position was rather bad altogether.

Cultivation of small holdings.

9001. (*Mr. Clay.*) Referring to the small holdings, were they in grass?—Almost all under cultivation. I should say that 90 per cent. was cultivated land.

9002. Would it not be better if it were used for grazing and using it as a dairy farm?—Yes, perhaps so; but 20 acres in grass would not give a man employment.

9003. Would it not give his family employment in the shape of making butter or cheese or anything of that kind, and the man might take the out-door work?—20 acres in the Isle of Axholme might keep, summer, winter, wet and dry, seven cows.

9004. Would that not be sufficient for a wife and family?—I think not. A man in Essex is expected to milk 15 cows.

9005. Were these rented holdings or property holdings?—I think 80 per cent. were freeholds, small properties, but some of those men had a little rented land along with it.

9006. Is not the reason of some of these rented holdings not being successful that they have been too highly rented?—The rented holdings, as I found them, were only paying half the rent that the freeholders were paying in the shape of mortgage charges; there has been a great reduction in rents lately, but those who are freeholders were under mortgage, and there has been little or no change in their obligations.

Rent per acre.

9007. What is the price per acre of those lands?—I speak of the very highest quality of warp land, which is making, say, an average of from 27*s.* 6*d.* to 35*s.* for exceptional lots an acre at present, then you get down and down until you get to the very stiffest clay there, which, strange to say, occurs in some districts, and the rent is not more than 10*s.* an acre.

9008. Do the rents of those small holdings compare favourably with the rents of other farms alongside of them?—I am disposed to think that the small holdings are paying larger rents per acre.

9009. You say 35*s.* to 40*s.* per acre would be a fair rent, and that 35*s.* would be the maximum rent actually paid?—So it is; that is what was given to me. The scale of fair rents was given to me by a solicitor and agent, so that probably the opinions of the farmers might be a little different. I think from about 30*s.* would be a fair average rent for the best class of warp land.

Rent of small holdings.

9010. In your experience of small holdings in Ireland or Scotland is it not the fact that these small holdings pay about double the rent?—Not double, but a larger rent.

9011. What percentage more would you put it at?—I would like to deal, so far as I can, with facts that came under my own notice.

9012. Can you say generally?—I know a good deal about the small holdings in Ireland, and I should say that with regard to the small holdings in Ireland, as I found them, the rents were from 10 to, perhaps, 15 per cent. over what a 250 acre farm would be; it depends a great deal upon the district and the locality.

9013. And in Scotland, what do you say?—In the south of Scotland, which you and I know pretty well, we have no small holdings.

9014. There are some of 10 or 20 acres?—I have never had anything to do in my immediate district with them. I do not think there are any. In Teviotdale, where I live, the smallest farm that I can think of is 71 acres. I know that was rented at 2*l.* 10*s.* an acre, I speak of 12 years ago.

9015. Was that not out of proportion to the 200-acre farms?—It was; and the last tenant had to leave it on that account.

History of the small holdings.

9016. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Has this Isle of Axholme been for a long time back broken up in this way?—Yes; the history is very peculiar. It was formerly nothing but a swamp, and many years ago, a very long time ago, a Dutchman, Vermuden, came over, and he spied out the land, and he was evidently a clever man, and he made some proposal to the Sovereign at the time that he would drain the land provided that he would get something for it. An arrangement was made by which the Isle of Axholme was divided into three parts, he getting one, and the king another, and the third was lotted out among commoners; they had some peculiar name, and it was cut up. Then the Inclosure Acts came, and this creation of small holdings stopped.

9017. Did you find out how before the year 1871, say in the sixties, the people had been doing; before the bad times came?—They were undoubtedly doing well.

9018. Entirely off the produce of those holdings?—Entirely off the produce of the holdings.

Small holders and labourers compared.

9019. Have the ideas of those people altered very much?—Very much. A great many of those small holders told me that they were not anything like as well off as labourers, and they did not know what was going to take place.

9020. But I mean, when the holdings were doing well, did they live in those years gone by in a more sparing and economical way than they do now?—I could not say, because I was not there; but I inferred something from the size of the houses. I saw a house that was built 25 or 30 years ago on a farm for a farmer of 30 acres; it had a kitchen and a sitting-room, and three bedrooms, and a front room, and a bacon store, and a coal-house; that was built about 30 years ago, and I thought that it was perhaps a bit too big.

9021. And that was upon a 30-acre holding?—I will correct myself. I see from my notes that it was 24 acres.

9022. But the general gist of the evidence is that unless they can find other occupation it is almost impossible really to live comfortably and rear a family upon that amount of land?—That is the drift of the evidence so long as those charges remain, so long as they have to pay such a big rent.

9023. (*Mr. Little.*) These freeholders in the Isle of Axholme seem to be the victims of the land hunger?—I think they are.

9024. They have been so greedy to possess land that they bought it at more than its value, and they are hampered by the incumbrances?—That is the result of the evidence.

9025. The island is not one which is attractive to large proprietors and capitalists for the purpose of residence?—No; it is a very unattractive place.

Small freeholders and tenants compared.

9026. These people are very much worse off than they would be as tenants?—Very much.

9027. You have given some particulars as to the number of holdings of each size in the three parishes. I just draw your attention to that, for the purpose of getting it on the notes. These holdings are not separate occupations, they are separate plots, and perhaps ownerships, but not necessarily entire occupations; one person may hold several?—Yes, undoubtedly.

Size of holdings.

9028. But they are divided. The parishes seem to be divided into an enormous number of holdings, which are capable of being held separately, and not as large farms?—Yes.

9029. There seem to be about 23 per cent. of the holdings in those three parishes of the whole number which are holdings of under one acre?—Yes.

9030. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Are they unfenced as a rule?—They are unfenced in some localities, but fenced in others.

9031. (*Mr. Little.*) But something more than 50 per cent. are over one acre and under 10 acres?—I am sure you are right.

9032. And only 3 per cent. are over 200 acres?—Yes.

9033. Those are held by occupiers only?—Yes.

9034. Many are let by persons who are small owners?—Yes, a great many of the small properties near town have been bought lately by shopkeepers, and they sub-let them in little pieces, and each of these is returned in the rate-book as a separate holding. I took all those figures from the rate-books myself.

9035. As to these holdings of from one acre to 10 acres, do you know whether they are generally occupied by labourers, or are they combined into occupations of sufficient size to employ the holder; there are 50 per cent. of the whole number, I believe, over one acre and under 10 acres?—I think most of them are held by men who make this little farming their chief business, and perhaps their sole business.

9036. And are those of less than one acre also held chiefly by farmers or by labourers?—They are held by labourers living in towns. The towns in the Isle of Axholme are somewhat peculiar, they are very long and very straggling. Epworth town is over two miles long.

9037. They were on the high lands before the fens were drained, like the villages in the fen country?—They call them fields on the high land.

9038. Has the possession of small holdings encouraged among the people thrift—are they more thrifty than in other parts?—I could not make the comparison, because I never saw them before.

9039. But would you form an impression that they are frugal and industrious people—specially so?—Yes, I think they are. I think they would be more industrious if they had a little more encouragement.

9040. They are not economical of labour?—No.

Cost of labour.

9041. The cost of labour is excessive, is it not?—The cost of labour per acre surpasses anything I have ever had to do with.

9042. If the amount of the labour given by the man and his family is taken into account, the amount expended on labour is very large indeed?—It comes to about 3*l.* per acre on some holdings that I looked into.

9043. And is the produce proportionately large?—On the farms that I am thinking of the crops were very good indeed, but nothing out of the common—no better than that of a larger farm with 50 per cent. less expenditure on labour.

9044. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Are those cultivated with the spade?—No, with the plough; they have a sort of barter and change amongst themselves.

9045. (*Mr. Little.*) The scattered nature of the land adds considerably to the cost of cultivation?—Very greatly.

Re-allotment of scattered holdings.

9046. Do you think there ought to be some scheme for economising the expenditure of the holdings?—Yes.

9047. Is there any reason why those sections should not be enclosed and re-allotted as has been done all over the country?—There is no reason why it should not be done, but the difficulty would be in getting the small owners to consent. One would say, "You are putting "a good bit of land on to my neighbour, and you are "giving me a piece not so good."

9048. That difficulty has been overcome in many thousands of parishes in England where enclosures have been made of common fields?—If it could be overcome in the Isle of Axholme it would be a great advantage.

9049. When you said that the people would be more industrious if they had more encouragement, what sort of encouragement had you in view?—I was looking at the very heavy rent they are paying in the shape of mortgage charges.

9050. How could they be encouraged by a remission of these?—I have no idea.

9051. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Better prices, of course, would encourage them?—Yes, if the prices were what they were 30 years ago they would not feel their burdens.

Condition of freeholders and farmers.

9052. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Your report appears to be a very deplorable account of the condition of many freeholders and farmers of the Isle of Axholme; is it too much to say that in many cases it is verging upon bankruptcy?—It would not be too much to say that.

9053. That is the impression you formed of it?—Undoubtedly.

Low prices.

9054. With regard to the cause of all this trouble, I understand that there is not much complaint to be made of the seasons, is that so. I observe you say in paragraph 29: "Within the past 13 years there have "been good and bad seasons. The warp land in the "north, east, and south, requires a dry summer, and "there have been three or four very suitable seasons "since Mr. Druce visited the district. For the light "lands in the west a damp year is most suitable, and they "also have been at times favoured. Farmers agree "that, on the whole, the seasons have not been very much "against them, and 1893 has proved an exceptionally "fruitful year"?—That is exactly what was told to me, and what I believe to be the case. There were no complaints about the seasons; 1893 was a splendid season.

9055. Then the main cause of all this terrible trouble in the Isle of Axholme, which has ended almost in general bankruptcy, arises from the fall in prices of agricultural produce, I presume?—Yes, low prices of produce, and those big charges that I have been talking of.

9056. Which classes have suffered most?—I think I have classified them on page 19.

Reductions of rent.

9057. There have been great reductions in rent?—On the rented holdings there have been large reductions.

9058. Is there any complaint on that ground?—No complaint was made to me in the matter of rent.

Lincolnshire tenant-right.

9059. In regard to the question of tenant-right; does the Lincolnshire tenant-right prevail there?—Yes.

9060. Is that held to be satisfactory?—Yes; no complaints have been made to me on those points. The Lincolnshire custom seems to be extremely liberal in the matter of tillages and compensation.

9061. But in spite of all those advantages they have been overcome by the present depression in prices?—Yes.

Remedies for depression.

9062. Did they make any suggestions as to the remedies?—They did.

9063. What did they look to chiefly?—Protection, and the mortgage question—sweeping away all the mortgages altogether.

9064. Is the system of agriculture pursued in the Isle of Axholme to be taken as typical or representative in any way of agriculture in the rest of the county, or does it differ materially?—I do not know Lincoln county sufficiently well to answer that question; but it is not representative of the system of farming near Brocklesby, because there the holdings are large.

9065. But you are not well acquainted with the rest of the county?—Not sufficiently well to answer the question properly.

Mortgaged freeholds and tenancies compared.

9066. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Would not it be to the advantage of some of those freeholders heavily in debt if the mortgagees were to foreclose and the present owners were to take the farm at a rent?—But the mortgagee will not do that. That is the strange point. I went very particularly into this. If the mortgagee forecloses he would not get within 75 per cent. of the charge upon the land, so that it appears to be the better policy not to foreclose, and to take what he can get pending better times.

9067. But they would be in a better position if they went to the bankruptcy court and started afresh?—They would have nothing to start with.

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rticulars farms.

9068. No capital?—None.

9069. Do you know the rent of this farm that you mention in Appendix B.? I see one year the rent paid is 10*l.* and another it is 150*l.* Do you know the rent?—I think I mention it.

9070. Take this one of 73 acres. The rent paid varies so enormously, I was wondering what the rent agreed to be paid was?—The rent undertaken to be paid?

9071. Yes?—I do not seem to have mentioned it.

9072. Could it be ascertained?—I think it could.

9073. Because the loss seems to depend very much upon whether the tenant paid his rent or not. Then, in one year his house-keeping expenses and sundries are 49*l.*, and in another year 163*l.* How do you account for that?—I wrote to the man about that, and he explained that some years ago he had a labouring man that he fed, and he had a son that worked, and that was the explanation of the variation of the household expenses. Of course when he kept lodgers or boarded his labourers, the household expenses were heavier.

9074. (*Viscount Cobham.*) And the wages were so much the less?—And the wages so much the less.

9075. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Wages do not seem to be reduced in this year in which the housekeeping was high. They were higher in 1889 and 1890 than in the two years before when the housekeeping was low?—In 1889 and 1890 the housekeeping is 163*l.*, and the wages 79*l.* In the next year the housekeeping is less, but the wages are 20*l.* more.

9076. But going back to 1885, the wages are practically the same as in 1890, but the housekeeping expenses are less than half those of 1890. I suppose there is a different system?—I really could not tell. As I tried to explain to the Chairman, these accounts greatly bothered me, I could not see through them. I tried my best to get them put into ship shape, and even so they are not satisfactory.

ates.

9077. Are the rates high or low in this part of the country?—It is a strange thing, I could get very imperfect information about that. The small holders do not appear to keep their receipts. I endeavoured all that I could possibly do to get the rates, but they did not keep the receipts; they brought up a whole lot of things, but generally they were accounts from manure merchants and things of that kind: they do not keep them, so that I cannot answer that question. I could have found out if I had had time, but I felt I had little time.

9078. (*Viscount Cobham.*) A great deal of the land would be tithe free?—A great deal of it is tithe free.

9079. (*Mr. Dalton.*) If the rent of this farm is 100*l* per annum, the rates per acre do not appear to be heavy; in this account they come to about 10*l.* on an average, that is 2*s.* in the £?—This is the entry in my book:—Taxes on 30 acres and house, freehold, assessment 31*l.*; poor rate, 2*s.*, equal to 3*l.* 2*s.*; highway rate, 1*s.* 8*d.*, equal to 2*l.* 11*s.* 9*d.*; evidently there is no school board, but it is a voluntary rate, subscription for education, 2*s.*; land tax, 2*s.* 6*d.*; tithe on one field only, 10*d.* and then he brings in income tax.

9080. These rates are very high?—Those are the rates on this particular farm.

ents of mall and arge holdings compared.

9081. Do you think that the rent of a small holding is generally higher per acre than that of a large one?—I do.

9082. Is that owing to the value of the house bearing a larger proportion of the rent in a small holding than it does in a large one? If you exclude the value of the house would they have let it at a higher figure?—It is the fact that there are more competitors for small holdings.

9083. It has nothing to do with the house?—The house is an element that might be made something of, but putting aside the house small holdings make more rent.

ub-division f small oldings.

9084. (*Mr. Channing.*) Did you find sub-divisions produce a bad result?—Sub-division has been going on for very many years, and I could not exactly take upon myself to say that sub-division was producing worse results now than it did, except that the times are worse now. I do not therefore think that sub-division in itself is producing worse results. I think that the figures prove that the average size of a farm has not much altered.

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9085. I see you say that on the death of a man having one of these small holdings, part of it is generally sold?—Yes.

9086. Does that not tend to diminish the usefulness of the piece that remains in the hands of one of the sons?—It is sold outright. Take a holding, say, of 20 acres; the man dies and leaves it subject to certain charges, and his family cut it up into five different lots, the effect is that each part goes to make up another small farm and makes it bigger by so much; all the sub-divisions just make other places a little bit bigger.

9087. It does not result in the diminution of the holdings?—I think not.

9088. Now, the real point is that the capital and profits that can be made are eaten up by those charges and mortgages, and the immense prices they have paid for the land?—That is a very prominent point.

Celery growing.

9089. That is really the case; they are growing expensive crops, which pay very well, celery for instance?—Celery is a very expensive crop, it takes a man with a large capital to plant it.

9090. Are many of them growing it?—There are a good many celery plots. It takes 20*l.* an acre to plant it, and that means capital, to begin with.

9091. They could make a good profit but for the expense?—Yes, bar frost; it is a profitable crop to grow.

9092. I understand there are complaints about the railway facilities for getting to market?—Yes.

9093. Your attention has been drawn to Mr. Bear's book on small holdings?—I have read it.

Small holdings in 1882 and 1894 compared.

9094. With reference to the matter, he says that he was very much struck with the greater prosperity of the people than in the times when Mr. Druce examined the Isle of Axholme, that was in 1882?—Yes.

9095. Does that, or does that not, correspond with your observation?—It does not correspond with my experience. I read Mr. Bear's book on my way up.

9096. Mr. Bear says, on page 17 of his book, "But "when I reached Epworth I was agreeably dis-"appointed, for unlike Mr. Druce, I was struck with "the well-to-do appearance of the people and of their "houses and holdings, and the more inquiries I made, "the more satisfied I became as to a great improve-"ment in the circumstances of the small holders of "land having taken place since Mr. Druce was among "them. The houses reminded me of those I had seen "in Jersey, rather than of the cottages of farm "labourers, and I was much struck with the well "fed and happy appearance of the people"?—I agree with what Mr. Bear says about the cottages; I think I say in my report that the small holders' cottages are good, but I also say that the cottages are too good for the circumstances of the men in the present condition of affairs.

9097. Do you mean to say that they cost too much to keep in repair and that sort of thing?—Yes.

Rent.

9098. The rent of the land, I see, you put at from 3*l.* for the best down to 12*s.* 6*d.* in the case of some land?—Where is that?

9099. In your own report somewhere, I think?—Well, 3*l.* is a biggish price.

9100. Perhaps I have taken that from Mr. Bear's book. Then I will ask you what you found the rents of the lands let there to be?—By far the larger proportion of the land that I had to do with was freehold land, and the mortgagee's charge, if you call that a rent, ran up very high.

9101. You are not aware of land letting at 3*l.*?—None over 2*l.*; and I am not sure that I heard of any land as high as 2*l.*

Value of land.

9102. Then the value of the land would be enormously lower than the price paid for the best land a few years ago?—Yes, land that was bought for 120*l.* an acre, say, 15 years ago, would not make 60*l.* an acre now. That is an outside figure; perhaps, if I said 50*l.* it would be nearer.

9103. (*Viscount Cobham.*) That hardly corresponds with mortgagees not getting within 75 per cent. of their mortgage?—Mortgages are only on a certain percentage of the land. I was thinking of mortgages of 80*l.* out of the 100*l.* on the land.

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9104. Then, if the mortgagees sold the land, they would get 40*l.*?—In the case of a person who had advanced money to the full amount that was paid for the land, he would be a very severe loser were it to be sold now. In a great many places the purchaser has paid up, say, 10 per cent., or it may be 20 per cent., and borrowed the rest.

9105. But the mortgagee would hardly lose to the extent of 75 per cent. of his advance, which I think you said before—that was a mistake?—That was a mistake; what I meant was, that the land would bring at the outside 75 per cent. of its original value.

9106. (*Mr. Channing.*) In paragraph 21 you say that the money was advanced in much larger proportion than it would usually be advanced in the Isle of Axholme?—Yes, I hardly thought that anyone would ever lend so much as has been done in the Isle for land purchase.

Mortgages.

9107. The mortgages run up to the greater proportion of the freehold value?—I did hear of instances where the whole of the money was borrowed in many cases; more than 90*l.* of every 100*l.* was borrowed. I met a solicitor, who had a good deal to do with the sale of land, and he said to me, "I believe in the majority "of the cases, so long as the purchaser could pay 10 "per cent., he could get plenty of money on the land." I think I said that in my report.

9108. Only one more question; you said in the most of those industries men would be still more industrious if they had a little more encouragement. If they got the land at anything like its present value, the agricultural work they carry out would be very profitable to them, would it not, or would it give them a fair, reasonable profit if they held the land at its present value?—It would be a very great help, but they would want capital; they have not the capital to farm it now.

9109. Their capital is used up?—Yes, it is gone. If those excessive charges could be cleared off, and they had land at a fair rent, no doubt they are industrious men, and they would fight a good fight.

Small holdings.

9110. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) When those small holdings become vacant, are they readily taken up?—I believe they are snapped up, and sub-divided, and cut into little pieces, by one man here and another there.

9111. What would you consider a fair average rent that a man could pay?—It would not be quite judicious for me to express an opinion on a fair rent for land that I did not know. I am not sure that a man knows the fair rent of land out of his own district.

9112. You say that there are complaints about the rates. Are they based upon the present rental, or present value of the holding?—I do not know what the system of the assessment committees is in the Isle of Axholme; each assessment committee, perhaps, has its own customs, and I did not get any evidence on that point.

Effect of appreciation of gold on mortgages.

9113. (*Mr. Everett.*) You report to us that the mortgaged people on this island are in dreadful trouble. A mortgaged person is a person who has contracted to pay a certain quantity of gold every year, has he not?—I do not think that there is any obligation to pay it in gold.

9114. But all English money is gold, is it not?—I think Bank of England 5*l.* notes would do as well.

9115. But that is an order to pay gold, is it not?—He has to undertake to pay it some way or other.

9116. I was going to ask if there has taken place a great rise in the value of gold, would not the natural effect of that be, that all those people who pay a fixed quantity of it every year would be in trouble?—Undoubtedly, if they undertook to pay it in gold, clearly so.

9117. That is what everyone who owes money does in England, because gold is our only standard. Do you happen to know, that, by a series of legislative Acts in different countries during the last 20 years, enormously increased demands have been created for gold?—Yes, I am aware of the fact.

9118. Which has had the natural effect of raising the value of gold?—There is no doubt that gold has appreciated.

9119. And it really put those mortgaged individuals in the same position as they would be if they had contracted to deliver a certain number of bushels of produce, and the size of the bushel had been increased to hold half as much again as it did before, and they were compelled still to pay those larger bushels instead of the old bushels. That is a fair representation of the position in which these mortgaged individuals are placed?—I cannot exactly go into the thing.

9120. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You are not prepared to go into that question?—No, it is a little bit beyond me.

9121. (*Mr. Dalton.*) On page 20 there is an item of "borrowed money," 305*l.* How does that come amongst the payments?—I do not know.

9122. It does not appear in the details given at the end; ought it to be reckoned; if it is borrowed money is it not counting over some items twice?—No, I think this 305*l.* shows the total disappearance of capital, and a sum of 305*l.* was paid into the concern by the farmer's wife. I explain it in that way.

9123. But this is in addition to the losses, or it is part of the loss, and so you have put it in?—Well, it evidently does not mean that, then.

9124. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I only want to ask one question: In your visits to Essex, and to the Isle of Axholme, were you, in your visit as Sub-Commissioner, acceptable to the people?—I was never more heartily received in all my life than in those two districts.

9125. They were glad of the opportunity of laying before you the position of agriculture in those districts?—Very much so.

9126. Does that lead you to think that, in other districts, the people are anxious to have the visits of Sub-Commissioners?—I have a great many letters, asking me to go down there, to which I reply that I have no instructions to do so.

9127. Were they from various districts?—I had letters from other parts of Lincoln.

9128. Where did you say from?—They were all from Lincolnshire.

9129. What districts were you asked to visit? Could you place that information before the Commission?—I have the information in my books. One letter was from the Lincoln Society—the Lincoln County Society, I think.

9130. Do you mean the Agricultural Society?—Yes. I have also received another letter from another agricultural society further south; I forget the name, but I have the letter here.

9131. Does the same thing apply to Essex?—No; they knew that I was going to make a pretty wide inquiry there. I had some requests from the Roothings to go up there, but, of course, it was out of my territory.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. A. W. Fox.

Mr. A. W. Fox.

Mr. Arthur Wilson Fox, called and examined.

9132–4. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You are one of the assistant Commissioners appointed to report upon the Glendale District of Northumberland, are you not?—I am.

Fall of rent in Glendale District.

9135. I gather that the fall of rent generally has been about 25 per cent. more or less throughout Northumberland or throughout the Glendale District?—Throughout North Northumberland, I think that is agreed to be about a fair average to take.

9136. You have come to that conclusion from the evidence as to rentals, furnished to you from the large estates?—Yes, and from the evidence of the farmers. I think they most of them agree that the average was from 20 to 25 per cent.

9137. The great bulk of the country is taken up by very large properties?—Very large properties. The Duke of Northumberland has 25 per cent. of the land there.

9138. And you think there has been a reduction from 20 to 25 per cent?—I think that is a fair statement.

9139. If that is so, that represents very much the average fall through a large part of the country generally?—I can speak for North Northumberland, which is chiefly confined to four unions, the Glendale Union, the Alnwick Union, the Berwick-on-Tweed Union, and the Belford Union. Of course that covers a large area.

9140. Has that fall, in your opinion, about represented the fall in the country generally, not in Northumberland alone?—That is so in Northumberland.

9141. I mean comparing it with the rest of England?—Of course I read my colleagues' reports, but I should say that, comparing it with Lancashire, where I was, the permanent reductions in Northumberland have certainly been greater than in Lancashire, but then the depression has not existed there so long.

9142. Lancashire is rather favoured in that respect?—The depression has not existed so long in Lancashire as in Northumberland.

9143. Roughly speaking the fall in rents throughout England is certainly not less than 25 per cent., and North Northumberland seems to have pretty fully participated in the general fall?—That is so.

Depression in Northumberland compared with other counties.

9144. There is a rather prevalent opinion that Northumberland and the northern counties generally have not suffered quite so much as the midland and southern counties?—That is so; but I have heard it stated by several witnesses in Northumberland that the fact of some of these large landowners making what was then a substantial reduction, at an early period, has enabled them down to the present time to fairly weather the depression.

9145. Speaking of the position of farmers generally, you would not say that it is at all comparable to the position of farmers in many counties, such as Essex, Hampshire, or Wiltshire?—Certainly not.

Sale of stock by live weight.

9146. As to the markets in North Northumberland, is the sale of meat by live weight at all coming into vogue?—I do not think so, because they sell it at auction marts.

9147. It is a practice in Scotland to a certain extent?—I do not know anything about Scotland. I do not think it is; I asked the question in the district where I was, and I do not think that animals are sold by live weight.

9148. Has the question excited any interest?—Some gentlemen recommend that they should be sold by live weight.

9149. Have the farmers taken up the matter?—Some of them recommended it, but others think that their judgment is as good as the scale.

Quality of labour.

9150. As to the quality of labour in North Northumberland, you put it very high, I suppose?—I should say it is the best in England.

9151. Both that of men and of women?—I should say that the women of Northumberland are as good as any of the south countrymen.

9152. Although there is some deterioration referred to in your report?—Yes; comparing the present with the past, there is some deterioration, and a doctor there of great experience told me, and the late Mr. George Culley held the same view, that the change of diet which was commenced by payment in cash, instead of in kind, has deteriorated their bodily strength; and that is the general opinion in the district among the people themselves. It is the fact they are not the race they were.

9153. But notwithstanding that, the quality of the labour is good?—It is as good as anywhere in England.

Cost of labour per acre.

9154. Should you consider that, taking the wages they receive, the labour is as cheap per acre as in other parts?—Some of the farmers up there, men farming in a very large way, consider that the labour question is the most serious they have got to deal with, owing to the increasing scarcity of the men and the increase of wages, because in the last three years, of course, just when the times got worse, wages went up 2*s.* a week, and since 1871 the women's wages have gone up 3*s.* a week. I state here that, assuming the men were now paid in kind, as they were in 1870 and 1871, assuming present prices, they would be now paid 7*s.* 3*d.* per week less than they are actually, that is to say, if they had shared in the farmers' losses, they would be receiving 7*s.* 3*d.* a week less.

9155. Are you acquainted with the parts of England where the wages are low?—I reported on the Eastern Counties for the Labour Commission.

Labourers in Essex and Northumberland compared.

9156. Do you agree with what we have heard from Essex, that notwithstanding the inferior quality of the labour in Essex, it really pays the Essex farmer better to employ an Essex labourer at Essex wages, than it pays the Northumberland farmer to employ a Northumberland labourer at Northumberland wages?—I would say it would not.

9157. You prefer the good men at the higher wages?—Yes. I know a few farmers in that county who have been paying their men a high rate of wages; and they say that it always pays them, and that they get the best quality of labour by paying in that way.

Leases.

9158. Are leases generally taken by the farmers? You gave us instances of 13 leaseholders—have the leases been recently taken?—I do not think that I stated the number of leaseholders. I have given some instances of leases.

9159. I have the number here of holdings and leases on Lord Waterford's estate?—Lord Waterford has got a peculiar system, which is very beneficial to the tenants, because he allows them to break their leases on two years' notice, while he could not give them a two years' notice, but would have to let them go on to the end of the lease. If they wanted to go they could do so by giving that notice.

9160. In consequence of the favourable character of that lease is it generally availed of on the Waterford property?—There are certainly more leases there.

9161. On page 76 of your report you say, "Out of 17 "agricultural tenants on the Ford Estate, 11 hold "under leases or agreements for a term of years." Are we to understand that they renew the leases when they fall in?—Yes.

9162. Do you mean that it is popular?—Yes, that it is popular because they can give a two years' notice instead of one. They can break the lease themselves, but the landlord cannot break it.

9163. But when they ask for a reduction of rent they have to give the notice; that is the practice, is it not?—Yes, that is what the agent tells me.

9164. On another page you state that the value of land has gone down considerably owing to the feeling of insecurity. What insecurity did you mean?—I meant that the buyers are afraid that the land would still further depreciate in value.

9165. It is a question of price and not owing to anything political?—Yes.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

9166. You do not find that feeling existing out there?—I should think that the majority of the farmers there are discontented with the Agricultural Holdings Act. But as far as insecurity of tenure is concerned, as far as there is any anxiety about being turned out of their holdings unjustly, I do not think there is anything of the sort.

Decline in selling value of land.

9167. Has the selling value of land fallen very considerably?—Yes; but then, of course, the permanent rents have depreciated 25 per cent.

9168. They are afraid of a still further fall?—Yes, and if prices continue to fall, I venture to think that it is not improbable that the rent will still further be reduced there.

Leases and yearly agreement compared.

9169. (*Mr. Channing.*) I wanted to ask you one or two questions. You say on page 75 of your Report, that much of the high state of cultivation is attributed to the long leases, and that some of the agents attribute bad results to the introduction of yearly tenancies. I wanted to ask you on that what the terms of those long leases were. Did you form the impression that under the system of long leases the land had been moderately rented?—As far as I could ascertain there has not been any friction about rent in that country.

9170. The leases there are gradually terminating?—Yes. Before the depression I do not think there was any feeling that the rents under the leases were too high.

9171. And therefore the tenants had really the advantage of the use of the land and the enjoyment of their own improvements at a low rent, presumably a rent which did not cover any part of their improvements?—I think so.

9172. You quote from Mr. Bolam, at the bottom of page 75, as to the bad results of the introduction of yearly tenancies?—He says, "Since 1879, when the "agricultural depression began to be felt, tenants "have been unwilling to run the risk of taking leases "with prices falling."

9173. In what direction were they diminishing their application of capital in consequence of the tenancies coming in?—Opinion is rather divided about that; I met a very large number of men, who said that they farmed just as high under a yearly tenancy as under a lease; but there were others who said that that was not the case. In that particular district the landlords are very large ones, and they are men with very large capital, and I think, on the whole, there is a feeling of security under such landlords as those.

9174. Where there is a feeling of security the tenants still farm well, I suppose?—Yes; and there is evidence in the Report that the agent of the Duke of Northumberland and the agent of the Marquis of Waterford consider that the land has not deteriorated in the last few years.

9175. I am asking about the result of yearly tenancies. May I take it that the evidence brought before you did not tend to confirm Mr. Bolam's statement?—Opinion was considerably divided on that point. Some farmers themselves told me that they certainly farmed as high under a yearly tenancy, but I heard a lot of others who said that they did not.

9176. Did you infer that the diminution of the outlay of the farmer was in the form of labour, or in manure, or in what special way?—I do not think it was in manure, because I think that that class of men would not cut down manure in any way, unless they were really very hard pressed. I think the diminution in the outlay was in improvements on the farm, and, in some cases, on labour.

9177. Then, I rather gather that you did not notice that there was any general tendency to starve the farms in any way?—Certainly not.

Expenditure on permanent improvements.

9178. You refer to the large percentage of expenditure on permanent improvements and repairs, and buildings, by the landlords; I suppose that was general in the district?—I should say, comparing the position of North Northumberland with other counties that the buildings there are very good. But there are some bad ones. On the whole the men who own that land have got capital, and the buildings are good.

Tenants capital.

9179. Have the tenant farmers generally a fair amount of capital?—Well, they are no doubt men who have had a good deal of capital. How much they have lost during the last three or four years, or since 1880, it is rather difficult to say. Of course rents have been reduced, but the evidence of all the agents is, that the present rent is punctually paid, and that there is no difficulty in letting farms.

Demand or farms.

9180. Is there a demand for farms at a not decreased rent in this district?—There is plenty of demand at the present for farms at present rents of all sizes.

Effect of Agricultural Holdings Act on agreements.

9181. And is it your experience that the effect of the Agricultural Holdings Act in Northumberland has, as in a great many other northern counties, been rather in the direction of indirectly causing better agreements than of actual direct use?—Several witnesses of position have told me that they think it has had the effect of getting better terms for the tenant; that it has made landlords realise that compensation should be given as far as possible, but the Agricultural Holdings Act has not often been put into operation there.

9182. Have you formed any opinion as to the way in which the valuations were carried out in the district. I see you have a passage here as to the recommendation of the Newcastle Farmers' Club attached to the bottom of page 90 of your report?—Yes.

Fixed scale of compensation for improvements.

9183. As I understand it the Newcastle Farmers' Club have repeatedly stated that 10 or 12 years ago the mere time scale of exhaustion did not compensate the best farmer in a proper way?—Yes.

9184. I should be very glad to hear any further comments?—They drew up a fixed scale, which they hoped would be acted upon throughout the country, and which they thought would be a fair one. It was acted upon to a certain extent within the last six or seven years, but I think that people generally came to the conclusion that a fixed scale was an impossibility; that you cannot lay down a scale for all soils, as soils have different effects upon manures. The gentleman who took an active part in drawing up that scale, Mr. Scott, told me that, after all, he had come to the conclusion that a fixed scale would not work. I think that is the general opinion of the district, although Lord Tankerville and his agent, Mr. Bolam, and one or two other witnesses told me that they would rather have the fixed scale than have the matter go to arbitration, because they thought it would avoid cost.

9185. What is the opinion of men who take that view as to the best way of having agricultural compensation; would they strike out all the schedules of the Agricultural Holdings Act, and that sort of thing, and simply leave it to experts to say how much a farm had been improved or deteriorated?—You mean the men opposed to a fixed scale.

9186. Yes?—Well, the other suggestion was, to have a county board, or some authority of that sort, who would give more uniform decisions than are given at present.

County boards of valuers.

9187. Would they have a semi-official list of valuers, or something of that sort—a board of valuers?—Yes; I think Mr. Sanderson put forward a scheme which a good many men support. It is on page 92 of my report. He said, "Let the county council and the "justices in quarter sessions each name six gentle-"men to constitute a county board of agriculture. "If either a landlord or tenant so require, let a "farm when first let be inspected by two members "of the board (landlord and tenant each selecting "one)."

9188. Does that procedure tend to the settlement of compensation by periodical inspections, and then a decision by an expert at the termination of the tenancy, whether the farm had been improved or deteriorated?—Yes.

9189. Without any time scale for specific improvements?—Yes, that is what he said.

9190. Was that supported by a good many practical men?—A good many men thought that would be a good plan. Mr. Scott advocated very much the same sort of idea as that which he gave to the late Mr. Coleman, who reported to the Duke of Richmond's Commission. I did not set it out at length because it was set out in that report to the Duke of Richmond's Commission. (See Appendix A., XXV.)

Railway rates.

9191. With regard to the railway rates, there is a good deal of complaint about railway rates and the access by railway to the various markets?—Yes. I have set out some of the rates, and up to the time of this report they had not been reduced. You will find that on pages 101 and 102 of my report.

9192. Is it not the fact, that in the past year, in those districts of North Northumberland, you had comparatively large hay crops?—Some of them, in some districts. Of course in Lancashire they have a much larger demand, because they sell hay to the big towns.

9193. Is it not a fact that those Northumberland farmers, in some districts of Northumberland at any rate, were enabled to compete with the foreign hay which was rushed upon the London market owing to the high railway rates?—I heard that in Lancashire, but I did not hear it in Northumberland. They complained in Northumberland about dealing being an impossibility owing to the high railway rates.

Labelling of foreign meat.

9194–6. (*Mr. Long.*) I wish to ask you one or two questions with regard to the recommendations which have been made, and which you comment upon in paragraphs 31 to 40 in your report, with reference to paragraph 32, as to the labelling of dead meat; did you have any definite proposal or suggestion made by anybody to you as to how that should be carried out?—No, that was the difficulty. The only practical suggestion I had was to make the butcher take out a licence.

9197. What for?—To put it over his shop, and put it on his cart.

9198. Do you mean a licence for the sale of foreign meat?—Yes. It was also suggested that on account of the difficulty of getting a conviction, as there always is under the Merchandise Marks Act, a very heavy penalty should be inflicted, so that it would be hardly worth anyone's while to commit a fraud.

9199. Do they believe that there is a very large competition in this foreign meat as against home-grown meat?—That is the general impression.

9200. What effect do they think it has?—They think that it undersells English meat.

9201. Do they think the foreign meat is sold as English meat at English prices?—Yes, certainly.

9202. Therefore the price is kept up, but in reality meat which is presumed to be English meat, and is sold as such, is really grown abroad?—If I may refer to the Lancashire Report, I say that Mr. Kay went into a shop in the Strand last winter and found that all the meat that the butcher had labelled as English meat was foreign meat. I think that he gave that evidence before the House of Lords Committee.

Assessment to local rates.

9203. I saw that in your other report. Now one question about the rates; you say that everybody agreed that the rates and taxes are very unduly assessed, the land is very unduly rated?—Yes.

9204. What do they suggest would be a better system, do they think that the proportion of value of land and houses on the one hand, and manufactories and personal property on the other, are out of their due proportion?—They say they are out of their due proportion, but I heard no practical suggestions.

9205. Do you know at all the practice of assessment committees in North Northumberland, or did it come before you at all?—No. I put it in my Lancashire Report, I forget what they took off.

9206. Did you ascertain whether there was a uniform practice which governed all the assessment committees, or was there a great variation?—I cannot say that, I have given that in Lancashire in the union I was in.

9207. It was only a sort of general suggestion. Did you discover whether the rates had been raised really or had remained the same?—I am in communication about the rates now. I have had some difficulty; it is difficult to get at these figures sometimes, because it is done voluntarily and takes a great deal of trouble, but I shall be able to get it from the Unions before this Report is issued. I do not think that the rates have been raised in the unions I was in there.

9208. Is that owing to the fact of there being more economical administration, or to the fact that the rates have received relief?—The rates have received relief.

9209. That has been felt in that neighbourhood then?—Yes.

Letting of farms.

9210. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I understand that there is no difficulty in letting farms in Northumberland?—None.

9211. Even at the same rate?—At present rent, no.

9212. I think there were some cases where they were let at advanced rents, were there not?—I did not say that.

Evidence of depression.

9213. How is the depression shown then?—Well, the depression is shown in the general reduction of rents since 1880, and I think that landlords have been asked to do more, that tenants are not in the position to do so much themselves as they did; and there is evidence certainly in some districts that the land has deteriorated. I think Mr. Bolam, Lord Tankerville's agent, says it has deteriorated 30 per cent., and there is also evidence from manure merchants to say that some farmers are buying less manure, and that they cannot get their accounts paid as they used to do.

9214. I suppose this shows that, as far as the tenants are concerned, they are making less profits than they did before?—Certainly, less profits.

9215. At the same time I observe that there is not only no difficulty in letting farms, but there is a keen competition for them?—Yes.

Reductions of rent.

9216. And notwithstanding that those reductions of rent have been made of something like 20 per cent.?—Yes.

9217. Is that about the average?—From 20 to 25 per cent.

9218. And in addition to this, there has been an unusual amount of outlay on buildings and improvements of that kind?—That is certainly the case; of course there are exceptions, there are one or two properties where there is no money.

9219. Referring to paragraph 10 of your report, I want you to explain this: "The farmers at the meeting at Hedgeley said that the same rent is bid for a farm when a man leaves even though it is well known he has not made it pay." What makes them do that?—I think that they are not good business men. They may think they are rather cleverer than the last man who had the farm.

9220. They think that they could make it succeed by better management where their predecessors have failed?—I think that must be it.

Fall in prices.

9221. I want to ask you one or two questions with regard to the statements made to you as to the cause of agricultural depression. There was a general agreement that it was due to fall in prices, was there not?—Yes.

Appreciation of gold.

9222. But I observe in paragraph 26 several witnesses express a strong opinion that it was greatly due to appreciation of gold, and that this subject was much overlooked by those who discussed the cause and remedies of agricultural depression, and there were two gentlemen whom you quoted, Mr. H. S. Scott and Mr. Forster, of Budle?—Yes.

9223. Did you have any conversation with those gentlemen?—Only with Mr. Scott. Mr. Forster wrote to me. I know him.

9224. Were they men who had carefully studied this question?—Mr. Scott certainly has, and Mr. Forster wrote and said that it had been a study of his for years.

9225. And they both expressed to you the strong views which are contained in the extracts in your report here?—Mr. Forster's opinion is that the appreciation of gold is at the bottom of agricultural depression; that that is the only cause for it.

9226. Well, then a third gentleman, Mr. Hughes, of Middleton, also referring to the cause of agricultural depression, puts this cause as first again?—Yes. He is a gentleman who thinks very deeply.

9227. Might we not suppose that the gentlemen are more or less experts upon this question?—Yes. I should say that all three of them are men who would not speak about any subject unless they had studied it.

9228. Are they practical farmers besides?—Mr. Scott is a gentleman who farms very largely; he has 10,000 acres, but I understand that he has got an interest in collieries as well. Mr. Forster, of Budle, is one of the very best men there; he is a practical farmer. Mr. Hughes is a landowner.

9229. Assuming that the Commission wanted to obtain evidence upon this point, would these gentlemen be desirable as witnesses, in your opinion?—Yes, I should certainly say that they would be all excellent witnesses, all three of them.

9230. Now with regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act, have you stated in your report all the recommendations that were made to you for any alterations in this Act?—Yes. I have stated the different opinions which I collected in Northumberland.

9231. And am I right in supposing that the main suggestions are in paragraph 29, page 90?—Yes, at (*a*), (*b*), and (*c*).

Fixed scale of compensation for improvements.

9232. With regard to the fixed scale of compensation, what was it contemplated that that scale of compensation should include, what improvements would be included in that?—All improvements except those which now require the consent of the landlord.

9233. All the improvements except those which are contained in the first part of the schedule of the Act?—Yes, that is cake, manure, and so on.

9234. And draining; would that be included?—Draining is included, but that is generally done by special contract up there. The landlords supply the tiles, and the tenants do the labour.

9235. That is a very common practice?—That is the custom. Of course there is no claim for labour under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

9236. But I should like to know a little more of this, because in the second schedule of course draining is an improvement under the Agricultural Holdings Act, and then in the third part, in reference to manures, the consumption of cake, and that kind of thing, the boning of land, the chalking of land, clay burning, Mr. A. W. Fox.

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liming of land, marling of land, and things of that kind, are those included in this fixed scale?—Yes, and liming was supposed to be one of the greatest difficulties in fixing a scale.

9237. Why?—Because lime runs five years on some kind of land, and 20 years on other kinds of land. I know there is a gentleman who got a very large award about 18 months ago; I think he got 20 years for lime.

9238. A committee was appointed to examine this proposal, I understand, but they ultimately agreed that it could not be done?—I understand that it has not been generally adopted.

9239. Can you tell me whether they were acquainted with the custom and practice that has been in vogue for many years in the county of Lincoln, where all these things are done?—I cannot tell you that.

9240. You do not know whether they had that before them?—I do not know that. Mr. Scott was one of the prime movers in drawing up that scheme.

9241. Still, the Committee reported to the Newcastle Farmers' Club: "It appears to your Committee that, "fixing a scale, naming a hard and fast value for "every improvement named in the Act, whether well "or ill executed, whether in good or bad repair, and "reducing the price by a certain percentage for each "year used, would in effect and incidence be unjust, "resulting in the good farmer getting too little, and "the bad farmer getting too much." Did you ever ascertain from them why it was necessary that there should be a hard and fast value for every improvement, whether well or ill executed? Surely, in the case of drainage it is perfectly possible to ascertain whether it is well or badly done?—They adopted three fixed scales of compensation for all improvements set out in the schedule, to be given according to the skill and care which had been exercised in the outlay. By this means they thought compensation would be given according to merit.

9242. Did they contemplate that this could be done without the interference or appointment of a valuer at all?—No, but I think they hoped that some expense in the procedure might be avoided.

9243. Again, I observe that another difficulty on their part was, that the consumption of purchased foods would leave the same manurial value in the case of a holding full of weeds, and very badly cultivated, and that the compensation for that would be as great as in the case where it was well done. But was it beyond their contemplation, where a holding was made into this bad condition, that there might be payments and counterclaims? Was that in their minds?—Yes, the the landlord's counterclaim would have to be considered.

9244. You did not ask them about these things?—No, I spent a day with Mr. Scott discussing a great number of questions.

Official arbitrators or valuers.

9245. Then I come to the next point, sub-section (*b*.), where they suggest, "The appointment of an arbitrator "for the county or district, so that greater uniformity "in decisions might exist." Is it not the case that in that county, as in many others, there are a number of professional valuers who practically value on a uniform basis?—Yes, that is so, but these gentlemen are not always called in.

9246. Do you mean to say that the changes of tenancies are made without calling in a valuer at all?—Yes, a valuer, but different men have different views as to compensation.

9247. Is there any County Association of Valuers in Northumberland?—I do not know.

9248. You are aware, I suppose, that that is a common practice in many counties?—Yes.

9249. And where that exists they proceed under general conditions?—Yes.

9250. Then they recommended, "The appointment "of arbitrators for the county or district to examine "the condition of farms when tenants enter, and "again when they leave"; did they suggest to you any scheme by which this was to be done—where, for instance, were the records to be kept?—That was put forward as a great difficulty, that however good a record was left of a farm, as soon as a valuer died there would be, no doubt, a difficulty in really arriving at the state of the facts.

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9251. Several suggestions were made as to how the Act could be amended, and one of the suggestions was this appointment of arbitrators to keep the records, for the purpose of having records?—Yes.

9252. But they did not go on to lay down the machinery by which it could be carried out?—No, I heard really no suggestions except those of Mr. Sanderson and Mr. Scott, which have been alluded to.

9253. Then those were the only suggestions really that you elicited while you were there as to the alteration of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I may say that a great number of men were of opinion that things must remain as they are, that everything is bound to be fought out, and that meant having witnesses and incurring expense.

Remedies for depression:

9254. (*Mr. Little.*) You received from farmers and others a great many communications suggesting remedies for depression which you have given in Appendix B. in a tabulated form?—Yes.

(*a.*) Malt tax.

9255. A very large number of those recommendations are with reference to the re-imposition of the malt tax?—Yes, that is a subject on which they were strong.

9256. Out of 26, 14 recommend the re-imposition of the malt tax, or a tax upon malt instead of beer? There is a very strong feeling upon that subject.

(*b.*) Relief from rates.

9257. And another thing was local rates, that some relief from rating was proposed?—Yes.

(*c.*) Protection.

9258. And the next was with reference to the import duties, seven were in favour of moderate duties?—Yes.

(*d.*) Reduction of rents.

9259. And five, I find, were of opinion that the reduction of rent was one of the remedies, that is five out of 26, and there are a great many other recommendations, but none of those were recommended by a great number, those were the principal suggestions?—Yes.

9260. Only one refers to the law of distraint?—Yes; in the evidence that I had there, but there were others who did refer to it in the district.

9261. You have spoken of the condition of the agricultural labourer, and you have expressed a very high opinion of the labourers of Glendale and Northumberland generally?—Yes.

Cost of labour per acre.

9262. Have you not found that notwithstanding the high rate of pay, the cost of labour per acre is less than in other parts of the country?—Well, I should say it was.

9263. Is it not partly attributable to the labour of women?—Yes.

9264. Women are something like one-fourth of the whole number of labourers?—Yes.

9265. And they are paid less than men?—Yes, they are.

9266. They are paid more than women in other parts of the country, but less than men?—Yes.

9267. And you say that they do as much work as south countrymen?—I worked a day or two with them once, and that is my opinion.

9268. I understand you to say that there is great complaint about the increased cost of labour?—Yes.

9269. You have furnished us with some accounts of a farm of about 500 acres?—Yes.

9270. I have been through these accounts and I find, if I have not misunderstood them, that labour has decreased in cost in the 10 years, or rather the total amount paid for labour has decreased, 20 per cent.?—But this gentleman has turned some land to grass, and he has got rid of some labour.

9271. By altering his system of farming he has reduced the amount of labour that he has to pay for?—Yes.

9272. It does not follow that the cost of labour was any less?—No; it has risen.

9273. Then the reduction of rent on that farm is only 7 per cent.?—Yes, that is near a town, I may say.

Demand for farms.

9274. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Did you find that there was an increased demand for farms during the last season or the previous one, at all?—I do not think there was an increased demand, certainly not; there is a greater demand for the small farms than the large, because those large farms require such a great amount of capital.

9275. Did the idea strike you that the demand for farms was because those men thought that things had reached about as low as they possibly could?—Well, Mr. Rea expressed his opinion that it was due to a certain amount of speculation and a certain amount of hope. I should think they hoped that things would turn.

Official valuers.

9276. In reference to that question about arbitration as proposed, was the idea in the minds of these gentlemen that one man should be appointed to do the work that is virtually now done by three men?—I did not hear that proposal; the proposal was rather put forward, as Mr. Sanderson put it, that the justices in quarter sessions, and the county council, should nominate a few men and form a county board, and then the landlords and the tenants from that body could each choose an arbitrator when it came to a contest.

9277. But looking to the fact that the great complaint against this Act is the expense of carrying it out, did they give any expression to the effect that that was one way of lessening the expense, if the two parties had to take an arbitrator who was fixed upon by anyone who was chosen to name him in any county or district?—Do you mean whether that would lessen the expense?

9278. Yes?—All these proposals were put forward with a view to reducing the present expenses. I think that is one of the chief complaints that they have got to make against the Act there.

Payments in cash and kind compared.

9279. In regard to the payment now in cash instead of kind, how do these families get a supply of milk?—They do not get it.

9280. Do you hear complaints about that?—The doctors said it was having a very bad effect upon the health of the people, that they got anæmic.

9281. Did you hear complaints about the women themselves?—Most certainly.

9282. That it was a great loss?—The children drink strong tea without any milk instead of milk and porridge. They will not take porridge without the milk.

9283. Are the farm labourers satisfied with the change that they made?—They are satisfied in this way, that they feel that they get cash down, and they have not had to share in the losses consequent upon the depression—upon the produce. They were, of course, in a much better position in that way, but they do not spend their money on milk.

9284. You stated that the shepherds and grieves are taking farms now; do those men have to borrow money from banks to stock them?—I do not think they do; I think they save it, and they are rather increasing in number, and the landlords say they make very excellent farmers.

Reduction of rents.

9285. (*Mr. Clay.*) Talking about the general fall in rents in Northumberland, you put it at 25 per cent.?—That is what it was put at at two meetings I held, and by the agents whose names I have mentioned.

9286. I see on the Roddam Estate there is a reduction of 33 per cent.; there may have been a further fall than 33 per cent.?—Yes.

9287. And over and above he had built cottages and farm houses, and made large improvements to the extent of 10,000*l.*; that is a fall upon the price of land, over and above the reduction of rent?—Yes.

9288. Then you had Mr. Grey; he says that over and above the reductions in the farmer's rent, he has given the tenants lime, manures, and feeding stuffs?—That is what he stated.

9289. In what proportion would that be, the percentage over the 25 per cent.?—He could not tell me that; he was agent to several properties, and it would take some time to take that out.

9290. But it would be considerable, would it not?—I think he says that it is considerable. Hundreds of pounds have been expended by the landlords in giving their tenants lime, and manures, and feeding stuffs.

Fall in value of land.

9291. Further, with reference to the sale of property, on page 83 of your Report, you say "(2) A property "valued 20 years ago by Mr. Grey at 26,000*l.*, was "put up to auction a few years since, but 15,000*l.* "could not be got for it, and the mortgagees had to "take possession. (3) A property bought 20 years ago "for 17,000*l.* has recently been offered by auction for "9,000*l.*, with no bidders. The rent of this farm in "1874 was 740*l.*, and at present it is 380*l.*" If property falls in that way, of course it is based upon the rental?—Yes.

9292. So that appears relatively a fall of 50 per cent.?—Of course, I do not know the circumstances of these properties. Mr. Sanderson gave me those figures.

9293. But that is a very serious thing for the landlord, if he wants to pay off mortgages or family matters?—Those are three instances of very heavy falls in the value of land, but I cannot give you any more instances. I do not think there have been any sales in this district recently. Those are the only instances I could get.

9294. But if the sale of property shows a reduction of 50 per cent., a tenant cannot be content with a reduction of only 25 per cent., can he?—Of course I do not know whether these properties had any special circumstances attached to them; whether they were forced sales or not.

Official valuers or referees.

9295. With regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act, are you inclined to have official referees appointed to go and do the work?—Well, no doubt if the referees gave satisfaction to both parties, that would appear, from the evidence I got in North Northumberland, to be a somewhat widely spread desire.

9296. Would not it be a great benefit, in the way of saving expense, if those referees accustomed to deal with the work were appointed?—The question would be whether you would do away with all witnesses, and leave the thing entirely to the referees. As long as witnesses are called you are bound to have expense.

9297. I mean that there should be one referee appointed, and to let him do the whole of the work?—And leave the whole question to him.

9298. Yes?—Then it is suggested by some that it would be very difficult to find one referee who would be acceptable to both parties.

9299. But you might have those referees, as Mr. Chaplin says, chosen from the Society of Valuers?—Yes; I understand you to mean one referee. The feeling among the witnesses that I met was, that there should be a selection—that there should be a body of men from whom landlords and tenants should choose, and not to appoint one man that both sides were bound to take, whether they liked him or not.

9300. I did not mean two arbitrators and an umpire, but one referee officially appointed, as in the case of Agricultural Drainage?—A fixed appointment, you mean.

9301. Yes, a recognised practical agriculturist?—Yes.

9302. In regard to the scales of compensation, you have heard of that case of 20 years given for lime?—Yes.

9303. And the special referee there was an agent for a very good landlord, Mr. George Grey?—Yes.

9304. He sat and awarded, and there was no expense? Yes.

9305. Now such a man as he is would make a good referee in Northumberland?—There is no doubt about that, and there are usually one or two men in every county who command the confidence of everybody; but these men are rather rare, perhaps.

9306. Is it your opinion that if they should be appointed, the landlords and tenants would agree?—No doubt, if you could get a referee acceptable to both sides.

Effect of cash wages on diet of labourers.

9307. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Does the change of diet which has occurred amongst the labourers, through their being paid in cash instead of kind, consist simply of a non-consumption of milk, and the substitution of tea for it, in the case of children?—There is also this, that they do not take porridge as they used to. They also eat white bread instead of wholemeal bread, and the doctors say that the wholemeal bread is very bone producing, and they have given that up entirely now.

9308. And that these are the causes of the deterioration of the quality of the labourers?—Yes.

9309. Do they consume more meat than they did before?—I do not think that they consume much butcher's meat there. I am sure that they do not. They eat potatoes, and bread and butter, and bacon.

9310. So that the change of diet is the giving up of milk and porridge?—Yes, and wholemeal bread.

9311. Is that general?—They have rather a modern diet compared with the past. It costs rather more, but no doubt it is not so strengthening for them, or so good for them.

9312. (*Chairman.*) You give the account of one farm for the last 10 years?—Yes.

Accounts of a particular farm.

9313. Is that to be taken as a fair average?—Well, I should not set it forth as a good specimen. It belongs to a man who does other business, and a man who lives near a town; it is not a good specimen of a farm account in Glendale.

9314. How far is it from town?—It is close to Alnmouth, which is increasing in size.

9315. How far off?—Quite close to the town, and of course not far from Alnwick.

9316. If you look at this account for the last 10 years, it appears that for the last five years the tenant has done very much better than in the first five years?—He attributes that to laying down more grass.

9317. The first five years he made an annual profit on an average of only 17*l*., but in the last five years he made a profit of 289*l*. for the year, and that does not appear to be owing to the reduction of rent, because the rent has been reduced by only 29*l*.; the wages have been reduced somewhat—120*l*.—and apparently the better result has been arrived at by laying down more grass, and growing less corn?—That is what he attributes it to.

9318. That is what has resulted from the operation?—Yes.

9319. And apparently that has been effected without any considerable reduction of rent?—But I should not put that forward as a fair specimen of a Glendale farm account.

9320. Could you get any fair specimen for an average, because it would be very desirable that we should have it?—Of course, gentlemen are not very willing to show their accounts.

9321. At all events this is good for comparison with itself. It shows the course of business on that farm, that whereas for five years the tenant farmer, made very little profit, in the last five I find he has made a good deal, because 289*l*. profit would be 10 per cent. on the capital embarked, and besides that he has the consumption of the produce on the farm, and his family are living in the house rent free?—Yes.

9322. That would not be at all a bad account?—No.

9323. And if it was not a fair profit for the farmer there would be still a very large margin of rent to go for. He still pays 411*l*. rent, which might be reduced if the farmer did not get a fair profit?—Yes.

9324. Apparently the rates have remained very stationary?—Yes.

Local rates stationary.

9325. Whereas they were 32*l*. and 44*l*. the first two years, practically in the last 10 years they have been 88*l*.?—Yes.

9326. Therefore the rates are a considerable item?—Yes.

9327. That is where the rates, you would expect, would be high?—Yes.

9328. Have you given any illustrations of the course of rates on other farms, or not?—No, I do not think I have.

9329. You have not investigated how far the rates have been a serious burden?—I have written to the clerks of those guardians for the amounts of rates in 1882 and 1892, which will be added to this Report when they come. As far as I have been able to get the information, I have given some particulars at page 98; but the information is not very easy to get.

9330. One of the principal complaints of the farmers in the district has been the burden of rates?—The rates have not gone up.

9331. If the rates have not gone up that does not account for the depression?—They have not gone up.

9332. Has the assessment on land been reduced in proportion to the lowering of the rent?—Yes, because these are all permanent reductions in North Northumberland.

9333. And have the rates in the pound remained the same?—I have set out some of the rates in the pound here, and it is rather difficult to tell you from the present information whether, on the whole, they have. I think they have gone down.

9334. Then if the rates have been reduced in proportion there must have been a still greater reduction of rent?—Yes.

9335. *Mr. Lambert.*) Did you say that the rents have been reduced from 20 to 25 per cent.?—Yes, generally, throughout the district.

Competition for farms.

9336. And there is a keen competition for farms?—There is a keen competition for the small farms, and the reason for that is, the higher wages of shepherds and stewards.

9337. Does this keen competition raise the rent beyond the sum that the tenant can pay?—No, I do not think so. I think that the land in this district is in the hands of men of considerable capital, and their object is to get a good man.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. William Smith, M.P., called and examined.

9338. (*Chairman.*) You are Member for the North Lonsdale Division of Lancashire?—Yes.

9339. You are also a corn miller and merchant in that district?—Yes.

9340. An importer of flour?—Yes.

9341. And the owner of several farms in the Garstang district?—Joint owner with two of my brothers in the Garstang district.

9342. Of more than one farm—of several farms?—Yes, eight farms.

9343. With tenants?—They are all let to tenants. The total acreage is 840 acres; the largest one is 284 acres, there is one of 160 acres, one of 120 acres, three of 80, and two small ones of 20 and 16 acres. The two smaller ones are parcels of land with buildings, and are let in conjunction with the other farms.

9344. You are also President of the Federation of Tenant Farmers' Associations?—That is so.

9345. Have you given attention for some years past to the subject of agricultural depression?—Principally during the last two years.

Depression in Garstang district.

9346. What is the state of depression in your district?—It has become acute only during the last two or three years. Being largely a dairy and grazing district the low prices of grain did not affect us as they did some other counties.

Low prices.

9347. Are there special causes in the last two years for the depression having arisen there?—Yes; the drop in the prices of beef and mutton, and of dairy products, has become more apparent during the last two or three years.

Bad seasons.

9348. They have also suffered from the seasons?—The seasons have been unfavourable, inasmuch as we have had dry springs, and the wet has come in the autumn, whereas being chiefly grass-land the most favourable seasons are those in which we have abundant moisture in April and May, and the sunshine in the latter part of the year.

9349. Would you say that a large part of the difficulties of the farmers has arisen from the seasons?—No, I think the low price is perhaps the first cause. That has been aggravated by the unfavourable grass seasons.

9350. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do you refer to last year or the last two years?—The last three years I might say. Last year the spring was dry but warm. In the two preceding seasons the spring was both dry and cold, which was very detrimental to both meadows and pastures.

9351. (*Chairman.*) When did the drop in prices begin?—I do not think it was noticed very greatly in our district more than three years back, it was not felt acutely.

9352. What do you consider that fall in prices due to?—I take it that it is principally owing to the developments in steam communication, which practically means bringing all these various competing countries within a shorter distance of our own shores.

9353. Would that affect the dairy produce?—Yes.

9354. The sale of milk?—Not milk, except what comes in the shape of condensed milk.

9355. Does that district depend largely on the sale of milk?—Only the sale of milk about the towns; it depends upon the sale of butter and of cheese. A large quantity of cheese is made in the Lancaster and Garstang and Preston districts.

Tenure.

9356. Do you attribute the depression to any other causes?—Yes, I attribute it also to the tenure of land, the conditions under which the land is held. In the first place, rents are too high with the altered state of things. Up to a few years ago the farmers of this country had more or less a monopoly of our markets, that is to say, the distance of their competitors in point of time of conveyance, and the cost of conveyance of goods, gave them a very great advantage over their foreign competitors.

9357. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Up to when?—Speaking of my own particular district, up to three years ago.

9358. (*Chairman.*) Up to when did you say?—Three years ago; it has been felt most since then, and in consequence of the opening up of these foreign markets the land has ceased to have that exceptional value which it had previously.

Federation of Tenant Farmers' Association.

9359. Before I go further, what does the Federation of Tenant Farmers consist of?—It consists of a number of societies in the counties principally of Cheshire, Lancashire, and Cumberland.

9360. Federated societies?—Yes.

9361. How many of them?—I could not tell you the exact number, but I think somewhere approaching 30, with a varying membership, some of them small, containing 50 or 60 members, and some of them containing 500 or 600 members.

9362. Could you give me an idea of the total number of members?—I expected to have had that information but I have not got it here. I will send you that information.

9363. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Could you give it me approximately?—Probably an aggregate of 5,000 or 6,000 members.

9364. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Belonging to what?—To the Federation.

9365. Is that the society of which you are president?—Yes, I may say that the extension of the society would be very rapid if we had had any funds. It has been purely voluntary. The secretary is not paid, and we have had no extensive funds for organization.

9366. (*Chairman.*) Do these affiliated societies send representatives to the central one?—They do in proportion to their numbers. I think they send one delegate for every 50 members.

9367. How many members does the central society consist of?—The general meetings are attended by one delegate for every 50 members, so a society with 200 members would send up four delegates. There is an executive elected annually at that meeting, and the executive really conduct it.

9368. How often do they meet?—The executive meet at no fixed dates, but they are summoned when there is any special business. The general body, by the rules, meets at least once a year.

9369. And oftener if necessary?—Oftener if the executive call them together.

9370. Have they discussed these questions of tenure?—Yes, that has been practically the subject of discussion, and a Bill was drafted after mature consideration by the executive.

9371. Before we go to that, when did this movement begin?—I think it commenced in 1892.

9372. Then it is of quite recent date?—Yes, quite so.

9373. It developed into the preparation of a measure?—Yes; that was so.

High rents.

9374. What are the complaints made to the society?—Well, the complaints made are, first, that rents are too high under the changed circumstances, and that to await the natural adjustment of things would mean in Lancashire and Cheshire, as it has done, I believe, in other counties, the practical ruin of the farmers; for, before the adjustment was complete the farmers' capital would become exhausted, and probably at the same time the land on the farm would have been very largely exhausted also.

9375. Do I gather from you that up till three years ago there was no strong ground for complaining of the rents?—Practically not. I think I might even say that up to two years ago there was no outcry in the district I am speaking of.

9376. The rents were maintained, I suppose?—The rents were maintained.

9377. Without any great complaint being made of them?—There had not been the fall in prices I have spoken of.

Reductions of rent.

9378. Since the fall in prices you speak of, has there been a reduction in rent?—Speaking now of the district that I live in, and which I am more intimately acquainted with, I might say that there has been no general reduction of rent. The reductions that have been made have rather taken the form of temporary remissions of rent. I should think in most cases they amount to about 10 per cent. only—in some cases to 15.

9379. Then the last two or three years there have been temporary abatements in rent? — Temporary abatements.

9380. Which have not yet been converted into permanent reductions?—I could not say that in no cases have they, but it is the exception rather than the rule.

9381. It is the exception?—Yes.

9382. The general practice is to make temporary abatements?—Yes.

9383. And those have not yet been converted into permanent reductions?—No. They were so, I believe, in a number of instances on the last rent day, when that which had previously been a 10 or 15 per cent. temporary remission was made more or less permanent.

Particulars of farms.

9384. What have your brothers and yourself done on your estate?—We have in some cases made remissions near to 33 per cent. Take the largest farm—the 284 acre farm—the rental of which is now 550*l.*, of which we are bound by agreement to spend 50*l.* in manure for the grass land, that farm was let at 800*l.* some eight or nine years ago.

9385. What is the acreage?—284 acres. The rent was 800*l.*

9386. I suppose it is an exceptionally good farm?—It runs by the river side, and is very rich alluvial soil.

9387. Is it near to a railway?—It is not very near a large town; it is two miles from Garstang.

9388. Is it very favourably situated?—It is a very favourable farm, and one which has exceptionally fine buildings. My father, after he bought the farm, farmed it a number of years himself, and made very extensive improvements upon it.

9389. You have reduced the rent there by 33 per cent.—I will not say reduced it, but you have made abatements?—Not abatements, it is reduced permanently. It was re-let two years ago at 600*l.* a year, and we made a further voluntary abatement to the tenant as from this Candlemas—the past Candlemas—of 50*l.*; that makes it now 550*l.*, or 500*l.* net, as we are bound to spend 50*l.* a year in such manures as bones or lime.

9390. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is that a very common arrangement in Lancashire?—I do not think it is.

9391. (*Mr. Long.*) When you say it was re-let, do you mean to a fresh tenant or to the same tenant?—It was let under lease before, and the tenant died. His family was grown up, and they all wanted to divide the proceeds of the man's estate. He was fairly well-to-do, being worth 3,000*l.* or 4,000*l.* We relieved them from the balance of the term. There was still, I think, nearly two years to run, and as soon as we found a suitable tenant we relieved them of the balance of the lease and re-let. This tenant, to whom it was re-let for 600*l.*, said something about the times being very bad, and we reduced the rent a further 50*l.* to him this spring.

9392. (*Chairman.*) In the case of the smaller farms, what have you done?—In the case of one of the 80-acre farms, that was once let at 300*l.*; it is now let for 200*l.* That was let two years ago for 220*l.*, and the rent was further reduced 20*l.* this Candlemas.

9393. Are they let by the year?—They are all, with one exception, let on yearly tenancies.

9394. Do you find the tenants not willing to take leases?—I may say, in the case of the large farm, the tenant took that two years ago on a lease for a term of his own choosing—I think it was 10 years he took it for—then, after the lease was drawn and he was in possession, he demurred to signing the lease. We did not press him to sign, and I said, "If you like you can "be tenant from year to year instead."

9395. You have been willing to give leases, but you find tenants are not willing to take them?—The reluctance to take leases has been within the last two or three years.

9396. That almost necessarily follows from the fall in prices, with the uncertainty as to the future, I presume?—Yes.

Insecurity of tenure.

9397. Then complaints, you say, have been made, first, of too high rents, and, secondly, of insecurity of tenure?—That is so. There are one or two instances in Lancashire and Cheshire, one in Lancashire and one in Cheshire, that have been rather notorious during the past few months—cases where men have been dispossessed of their farms; in the one case owing to agitation in favour of an improved tenure of land, and, in the other case, owing to political opinions and the active part taken by a farmer in politics, I expect both those gentlemen will be called before you.

9398–9406. And as a ground of complaint by the association?—That is so.

Capricious evictions.

9407. You put it in that way?—Yes, as instances showing that men who are admittedly on all hands good farmers may be dispossessed of their farms for other and insufficient reasons. It is not on the ground in either case of any improper treatment of their land; they have both been very high-class farmers.

9408. Are those the only two cases that have come within your knowledge?—Those are the most prominent cases.

9409–9416. (*Chairman.*) These are two prominent cases which have occurred within your knowledge, and, I presume, you put it that what has happened in those cases may happen in others?—That is so.

9417. (*Mr. Long.*) Let us carry it a little further; do you put it that what has happened in their case has happened in others, but that you have selected these two as instances?—I have no doubt myself, though I am not able to give you names and dates now, that in many cases something of the same kind has happened.

Compensation for improvements.

9418. (*Chairman.*) Besides the high rents and the insecurity of tenure, have there been complaints also of insufficient compensation for improvements on leaving farms under the law as it now is?—Yes. It is generally felt that the Act of 1883 gives no adequate compensation. I may say that that Act has ceased to be acted upon of recent years, owing to the disappointing results in the earlier years it has been in force.

Changes of tenancy.

9419. Have there been many cases of changes of tenancy where the claims have been made, and where the results have been unsatisfactory?—I have not heard of any cases under this Act now for several years back. There were a number of cases in the earlier years, and the results were so disappointing in the expense and the nature of the award, that I think tenants generally have preferred to arrange privately with their landlords as best they could.

9420. Of course there have been a great many changes of tenancy?—That is so.

9421. In those cases, I understand you, they have endeavoured to come to agreements with their landlords, or rather with the incoming tenants, without resorting to proceedings under the Act, is that it?—The arrangements would be, as a rule, with the landlord, not with the incoming tenant.

9422. With the landlords?—Yes.

9423. And they have come to arrangements?—They have just made the best bargain they could, and got anything or nothing according as they could privately, but they have not gone the length of taking proceedings.

9424. Has that been on account of the insufficiency of the provisions of the Act for securing compensation or on the ground that counter-claims have been admitted under the Act which have more than eaten up the amount of compensation due?—On both grounds I think. The counter-claims have generally been as large or larger than the original claim, and then there is the expensive slow process.

9425. Have the proceedings in themselves been expensive?—I think there have been very frequent adjournments, and considerable expense incurred by frequent sittings of arbitrators and attendance of witnesses.

Compensation for improvements.

9426. Do they also complain that the modus of the Act does not, in itself, provide sufficient compensation?—That is so.

9427. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do they fall back then upon some local custom?—There is very little local custom between the out-going and incoming tenant. There is practically nothing covered in the district of which I have personal knowledge beyond the value of the unconsumed hay and straw on the premises, and the crop of wheat which the out-going tenant may have sown. They are practically all that the local custom covers. The rule is that the incoming tenant takes the hay and straw at a valuation from which one-third is allowed as manurial value; and as regards the crop of wheat which may be in the ground, the out-going tenant takes one-half of it, and the incoming tenant the other half.

9428. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I should like to know what time of the year these farms are entered upon?—Candlemas always in our district as regards the land, but the buildings at May Day—the dates are the 2nd February and the 12th May. There are certain local customs, as, for instance, that the tenant when he enters into possession of the land at Candlemas is allowed stallage for so many horses, and sleeping accommodation for one or two men according to the size of the farm, so that they may come and be proceeding with their spring work.

9429. (*Chairman.*) These three questions, the highness of the rent, the insecurity of tenure, and the insufficiency of compensation for improvements under the Agricultural Holdings Act, have all, I presume, been discussed by your Federation?—That is so.

Land Tenure Bill.

9430. What conclusions have the Federation arrived at upon them?—The conclusions they have arrived at are embodied in the Bill which I introduced into the House last session. I may say that I had myself determined to introduce such a Bill, but before the time came for the Bill being printed, and the expected time of second reading we had one or two conferences on the subject with a specially selected sub-committee of the executive, and the draft Bill was gone through very carefully, and they suggested certain amendments, and these were embodied in the Bill. (*See* Appendix A. XXVI.)

Land courts.

9431. What do they propose?—They propose, in the first place, the establishment of Land Courts to fix rents.

9432. Have you got a copy of the Bill?—I have some small pamphlets which give in a short form the main features of the Bill. I do not know whether they would be of any use, but I will hand in copies. (*Handing in the same.*)

9433. May I take it that generally the Bill is framed on the model of the Irish Land Act?—The basis of it is the Bill that was introduced for Wales by Mr. Ellis.

9434. It proceeds upon the general principle of that Act?—Yes, broadly upon the same ground.

Fixity of tenure.

9435. Does it propose to give fixity of tenure to the existing tenants?—It does, subject only to the condition that the man shall farm his land in a satisfactory manner and pay the judicial rent.

9436. Then any existing tenant would be entitled to remain in his holding for ever?—So long as he complied with those cardinal features.

9437. And subject to the rent being fixed by a tribunal?—Yes, once in five years on the application of either party. I may say there are certain exceptions. There are certain grounds upon which the landlord may re-acquire the land, such as for public purposes, the building of chapels, the provision of allotments, or small holdings, &c.

9438. The landlord may resume possession, may he not?—He may resume the occupation by himself or by any member of his family.

9439. Is the landlord equally with the tenant entitled to claim a judicial rent?—Yes, that is so.

Permanent improvements.

9440. You say that this was framed largely upon the analogy of the Irish Land Act, is there anything in your district in the condition of the tenants similar to

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that which existed in Ireland; had the tenants effected permanent improvements themselves largely?—No, not as regards buildings. I think, as a general rule, the buildings have been erected by the landlords.

9441. The English system may be said to prevail in your district?—Yes.

9442. The landlords effecting all the permanent improvements?—The bulk of them.

9443. You are aware, I presume, that the fact of the Irish tenants having effected all the permanent improvements themselves formed one of the main grounds of the defence of that Act?—I know that was an exceptional state of things, which gave greater force to the movement for it.

9444. There is nothing analogous to that in your district?—No, but I advocate this upon the ground of common benefit to all the parties interested. I think it would benefit the land-owner as well as the tenant.

Fixing of rent.

9445. Once every five years the tenant would be entitled to go into court and have his rent fixed?—Yes, that is according to the proposals of the Bill.

9446. Then on the termination of that five years he may be again entitled to go into court?—Yes, or the landlord.

9447. And so on, for ever?—That is so.

Sale of tenants' interest.

9448. Would it also follow that the tenant would be entitled to sell his interest?—Yes, to sell it during life, or to bequeath it at death. The way in which I provide for the valuation of his improvements is by the price they would command in the market. You will find that on page 4 of the pamphlet, at the bottom. There the landlord has the right of objection. Notice has to be served upon him, stating the name, address, and occupation of the incoming tenant, and the price agreed upon to be paid between the two, and he may, by giving notice, object to those terms upon the ground of their want of *bona fides*, or of the unsuitable character of the man who is proposed to be admitted to the farm, say, for instance, if he had had no experience of farming, or if he had no adequate capital with which to farm the land; and the court has power under such circumstances to vary the amount or to refuse to accept the man as a suitable tenant.

Conditions of tenure.

9449. Then in clause 7 I see there is provision made that the court may fix reasonable conditions of tenacy?—Yes, that is so.

9450. That seems to be a novelty, as compared with the Irish Land Act. On the application of either party apparently the court may vary the ordinary conditions of tenure and put in special conditions?—Yes, that is so; if the landlord refuses to give consent to permanent improvements provided for in the first clause of the Agricultural Holdings Act, such as buildings, the tenant may apply to the court, and if the court are satisfied that such additional buildings are beneficial to the holding they may sanction, without the landlord's consent, the erection of such buildings.

9451. Apart from this clause apparently, the tenant has not been entitled to make any permanent improvements in the shape of buildings?—Not without the lessee has got the landowners' consent, or he gets the consent of the court. I put it in because I felt that a man might have some hobby, he might be a breeder of horses, and he might want to erect a lot of loose boxes, and that sort of thing, which would be of no value to an average tenant following him. It would be a foolish and vexatious expenditure.

9452. Inasmuch as the tenant is to have fixity of tenure and to be entitled to sell his holding, and to hold it himself as long as he likes, and to sell it whenever he likes, one does not quite see why there should be any restrictions in the buildings he is to erect?—It might be dispensed with, perhaps, but it is really an attempt to make the Bill fairer, so that the man should show the reasonableness of his wish.

9453. The landlord would no longer have any interest in saying whether there should be more or less buildings upon it, so long as he is not called upon to erect them himself?—The landlord has the option in any case in which there is going to be a change of tenacy to re-acquire the whole of the interest in the farm. He may elect, if he wishes, to pay over the sum which has been agreed upon between the tenants, and resume full possession of the holding, and then of course choose his own tenant, as at present.

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9454. Still that is only upon payment of whatever may be agreed to be paid between the out-going and in-coming tenants?—That is so. I quite see the point you make and I do not suppose for a moment that the Bill is a perfect one. It seems that that is almost an unnecessary safeguard.

Compensation for improvements.

9455. I want to see exactly what it means, and to arrive at the reasons for it. Then it also contains provisions as to the compensation for improvements?—On the other point I may say that there is nothing in the Bill which prevents the landlord still making these improvements himself, upon the tenant agreeing to pay him interest upon the amount expended, and that being notified to the court becomes binding as part of the judicial contract.

9456. All that must be subject to the approval of the court, apparently?—Yes.

9457. Therefore, if the tenant is unable himself to make a permanent improvement, or erect a building, he must apply to the landlord, and if the landlord is willing to spend money for the purpose, then the consent of the court must be obtained; is that so?—Yes.

9458. That is to say, the rent can only increase with the consent of the court, and for that purpose it would have been necessary to apply to the court?—Yes.

9459. Then there was a further provision as to compensation for improvements; that, I presume, is to take effect in the event of the tenant being willing to terminate his tenancy?—Yes.

9460. Supposing he wishes at any time to give up, I presume at the end of the five years he can do so?—Yes.

Transfer of holdings.

9461. A tenant would not be entitled, I presume, to give up his holding short of the five years?—He would have to provide a tenant acceptable to the land-owner.

9462. I mean he could not transfer it without the landlord's consent when the rent has been fixed for five years?—He would have to find an acceptable tenant or otherwise retain it himself.

Lease-holders.

9463. There is a further provision, apparently, that the lease-holders are to be put into the same position as the other tenants?—At the termination of the existing leases.

9464. I do not think we need go into the question of common grazings, and so forth; that seems to be a special subject?—Up in the northern part of the district, Cumberland and Westmoreland, similarly to Wales in the pastures, there are certain rights as to sheep pasturage on the farms.

Constitution and procedure of land court.

9465. What do you propose in the way of a land court?—I propose the existing county courts as being at once numerous and easily accessible; then the tenants are more or less familiar with them, and with their procedure, and their decisions would be given comparatively quickly and at much less cost than any special court which might be created.

9466. The county court of the district would be the land court for that purpose?—The county court judge.

9467. Whatever size the farm might be?—Yes. The county court judge is really the one, and the power of the decision would rest in his hands, but he would be advised by two practical men, who would sit as assessors, just as is the case, I believe, now in the Admiralty Division of the High Court.

9468. Then what exceptions do you make to the provisions of the Act?—I make exceptions where the land is required for public purposes, such as for schools and chapels, or for allotments, or for the use of the land by the owner, or by his family. The degrees of relationship to which that is available are specified, I think, in the Act.

9469. Then I see a provision that "any holding which "is not agricultural or pastoral in its character, or "partly agricultural and partly pastoral," should be excepted?—Yes.

9470. Then lands in the hands of the owner and in allotments?—That is following exactly the provisions of the Welsh Bill, of which I spoke.

9471. Apparently there is no provision like that in the Irish Land Act, with reference to purely pastoral farms?—No.

9472. It goes further than the Irish Land Act in that respect?—I am not myself very familiar with the Land

Act, which was passed some years ago, before I took a prominent interest in these matters.

9473. Of course it follows also that there is no provision such as there is in that Act, that farms managed on the English system are also exempted?—No.

9474. In fact it goes very far beyond the Irish Land Act?—And the judicial period is much shorter It is five years against 15; and there is no appeal.

Remedy for the depression.

9475. Will you explain shortly to the Commission how you think this will operate as a remedy for the depression?—I feel in the first place that the want of security and the very inadequate compensation now enjoyed by farmers is having a very prohibitive effect both on their energy and skill in management. I believe it is admittedly the fact that farming, as a rule, has deteriorated during recent years. Very few improvements have been made by tenants now, because it is found from experience that a man who has farmed his land well has a much less chance of getting a reduction of rent when there is a drop in prices than the man who has farmed his land badly, because the farm which has been badly farmed would be very difficult to let, and could only be re-let at a very much less rental. The farm which has been farmed well has probably been very much improved, and improvement in the land would in many cases counterbalance the depreciation in its natural value from the drop in prices.

Land Tenure Bill.

9476. The Bill, if passed into law, it seems to me, would operate very differently, according to whether rents are falling or rising?—In any case the man would be certain of his farm at what was a fair rent under the then circumstances.

9477. But if the prices were falling, as they have fallen during the last three years, then tenants who have had their rent fixed before the fall would, at all events, be bound to pay the judicial rents during the five years?—I take it that, in fixing rents, the court would somewhat view the drift of affairs, and if it was very evident that prices were at the moment rapidly receding, they would take that into account somewhat.

9478. But there is no provision that, in the event of the prices falling during the five years, anything should be done for the tenant farmer?—That is so. My own predilection was in favour of a shorter period even than the five years, but I altered that from three to five in deference to the wishes of the tenants themselves as represented by the Federation.

Leases and agreements

9479. I understood from you that even your own tenants were very unwilling to take leases?—I ought to have explained, perhaps, in connexion with my own land—I did not know that you were going to ask me questions about that—that the circumstances are somewhat peculiar. My late father had a passion for acquiring and improving land; and every one of these farms which we own now was taken into his own hands after purchasing, and he made every possible improvement upon it in the way of buildings and fencing that it was possible for a man to make upon his farms, so that many of the conditions which pertain to other holdings have no force in this case.

9480. Quite so; but one would think that a tenant coming into one of those farms which are in such good order would all the more like to have a lease?—They have got frightened by the rapid fall in prices. A man may make a good bargain to-day, and it becomes a bad one in a few years' time. I must say, for my own part, that I have not been very anxious to give leases either, because my experience has been somewhat this: Take this one farm which is 284 acres—the largest one—that was let originally at 800*l.*; after the man had been on the farm for two years only, as things were going a little worse, the rent was voluntarily reduced to 700*l.*

9481. What they are evidently afraid of is that, if they took a lease for seven years, prices might fall in the interval, and they might find themselves landed in loss?—I suppose that would be their feeling; the farmer has been hit heavily of late.

9482. I do not see why tenant farmers should be more willing to take a judicial lease than a lease from a landlord like yourself?—I think with a judicial lease he would feel the security that he does not feel now in any case, certainly not in many cases. As regards throwing himself with energy into the improvement of the soil, he would have an absolute certainty that no advantage would be taken of him in that respect.

9483. Supposing the alternative is presented to one of your own tenants either to take a lease from yourself or to take a judicial lease under this Bill, or to remain as a tenant from year to year, do you think that he would be more willing to take a judicial lease under the Bill than a lease from yourself?—I think so. That was the opinion I gathered from the farmers in the district, that they would prefer to be under such a system as the Bill suggests; that is, under a court.

9484.—You do not think the same reasons which prevented him from taking a lease from yourself would induce him to be unwilling to bind himself for five years?—As a matter of detail as to the exact number of years, as I say, my own feeling was for a shorter period, but, of course, you do not want to have the farmer's hands constantly full of litigation, and the farmer always running to the court. Of course the thing would work both ways, and if we had a turn in the tide he would benefit.

Execution of permanent improvements.

9485. Do you contemplate that the tenants would themselves effect the permanent improvements, or that the landlords would still continue to effect them?—I think as regards buildings, in the main, they would probably prefer and expect the landlord still to make them, they paying a percentage upon the outlay.

9486. Do you think the landlords would be willing themselves in future to expend money?—I do not see why they should not, because there is special provision that, over and above the judicial rent, they shall be paid interest upon such outlay.

9487. It would be always subject to this, that, at the end of five years, the rents would be re-adjusted?—Yes, but the rent, with the addition of the buildings, surely would, under any circumstances, be more than it would have been without the buildings if they had involved a serious expenditure.

9488. Then do you contemplate that the landlords would continue to effect permanent improvements?—Yes; but I would only apply the term "permanent improvements" to buildings, I should not expect them to do such work as draining and boning the land.

9489. That, you think, the tenant should do?—I think the tenants would be quite willing to do that.

Railway rates.

9490. Have you any other suggestions or remedies that you contemplate, or that you have to propose?—There is no doubt at all that to some extent the railway charges are felt to be very burdensome; they are practically prohibitive of the removal of the produce of one district to another. I may say that in my own experience, as a miller, many years ago we used to get large quantities of wheat from Lincolnshire, at a rate varying from 15*s.* 10*d.* up to perhaps 19*s.* 2*d.* per ton. At that time the freight by sea from foreign countries was very much higher than it is now. The ocean freights have gone down. Take recent experience, say from California: Californian freights have gone down from as high as 80*s.* to as low as 17*s.* 6*d.* or 20*s.* per ton, but the railway rates from Lincolnshire remain practically the same. The result is, that it is perfectly impossible to use those wheats which we should very much like to use frequently, as an admixture with foreign wheats, to give flavour to the flour.

9491. Do you complain especially of the raising of the rates during the last two years, or are you complaining of what I may call the permanent rates?—I should say that I complain as regards that more important matter of the retaining of the rates at their former level, in view of the reduced cost of transit from foreign and competing countries. There have been considerable increases locally.

9492. You do not think that there has been a reduction of railway rates corresponding at all to those which have been effected in freights?—There has been none at all that I am aware of. In fact it has come to this point, that during the last 12 months I have been able to convey grain from San Francisco to Barrow, where my mills are situate, at the same or less cost per ton than grain can be conveyed from Lincolnshire by railway. We have had vessels with freight as low as 17*s.* 6*d.* per ton.

9493. (*Mr. Everett.*) From where do you say?—From San Francisco, a four-and-a-half month's voyage by sailing ship, at as low a freight as 17*s.* 6*d.* to 20*s.* per ton, and the rate by rail from Lincolnshire or Norfolk (those are the great wheat growing counties, we do not grow much in our own neighbourhood) is just as great, and remains unchanged entirely from what it was 20 years ago.

Experimental farms.

9494. (*Chairman.*) Do you recommend experimental farms?—Yes, strongly. I think agriculturists in this country have been handicapped very much indeed by the want of facilities which have been enjoyed by most of these large competing countries. I believe that throughout Canada and the United States, and also throughout France, Germany, and Switzerland, for many years back, the Imperial or the municipal Government has provided experimental farms, with schools attached. Something is being done in that direction now. The Lancashire County Council have decided to take a small farm, and the Cheshire County Council has already taken, I believe, a small farm.

9495. Do you think it should be confined to small farms?—It would depend upon the local circumstances. I would prefer a medium size farm. We call a large farm in our district a farm of 300 acres, and the great bulk of the farms are half of that.

9496. What would you call a small farm, 60 to 100 acres?—No; 80 to perhaps 140 or 150 acres.

9497. Are those farms that men can farm themselves, with their own hands and their families?—Yes, there are a great many farms so farmed; the man and his wife and family, with perhaps one, or it may be two, hired men work the farms.

9498. The man working himself?—Yes. There is quite a different system in the north from what you find in other parts of the country; we have hired men, who are mostly single men, and who live in the house with the family, and they are hired by the half year.

9499. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do you think that it would be advantageous for the county councils to apply the whole of the money granted to them which is applicable for the purposes of agriculture to the establishment of experimental farms?—Yes.

9500. Rather than to the giving of lectures?—Yes. My own experience is that the money spent in lectures round about the country is very largely wasted, because, as a rule, the lectures are too scientific and too technical in character, and the professors are speaking over the heads of the people; they go away retaining practically nothing.

9501. Are the lectures well attended in Lancashire?—Yes, fairly; some subjects better than others. Latterly they have been giving lectures on bee-keeping and horticulture, and the smaller branches of farming. I think they have abandoned the lectures to farmers pure and simple.

9502. But you think that agriculture may be taught more advantageously?—Two years ago I urged very strongly upon the Lancashire County Council to take up this at once. My idea was this: say the sons of the farmers leave the village school where most of them go, at perhaps, 14 years of age, I think the best thing for them to do is then to go to their own homes and work practically on the farms for two or three years, and then, when they have begun to take an intelligent interest in farming matters, they should be got, if possible, to go to these experimental farms or schools; it should not in any sense be an agricultural college for the sake of qualifying land agents and that class of men, but it should be a school where they might see the practice and science of every-day farming combined. The farmers, there is no doubt at all, are very largely wedded to old-fashioned notions, and I think they suffer very much by it, because they do not adapt themselves so readily as they might do to new ideas.

Ground game.

9503. Have you any provision about game in your Bill?—None at all.

9504. Have you anything to say to us with regard to the existing practice as to game?—In my own immediate neighbourhood it is not a crying grievance. If you go a little further south, perhaps in the Lytham district, it might be otherwise.

9505. (*Chairman.*) Have you any provision in your Bill which might be said to bear upon that?—I take it that as the Bill as drawn now gives permission to the owner only to enter upon the farm for certain purposes, and the pursuit of game not being one of those, the game would really be the property of the tenant.

Position of landowners under Land Tenure Bill.

9506. (*Viscount Cobham.*) What enjoyment would a landowner get out of his property in the future under your Bill?—He would have the pleasure of receiving the rents.

9507. Except the receipt of his rent?—If the land was, as I believe it would be, well farmed, he would have the pleasure of seeing a thriving tenantry and a prosperous country side, which, I presume, is something.

9508. He would become merely a rent charger?—Yes.

9509. What inducement do you think the landlord would have to spend money on permanent improvements under such conditions?—That he would get his interest on his money as on any other investment.

9510. Could he, as a matter of fact, get anything like the same interest for an expenditure upon a landed estate as he could get from consols?—I do not see why he should not for permanent buildings.

9511. What provision have you in your bill with regard to the fixing of the interest?—What do you mean by that?

9512. If the landowner spends money upon permanent improvements, the interest upon that money has to be fixed?—That would be by agreement between the landowner and the tenant, and they having so agreed the agreement would receive the approval of the court, and it would be recorded in the official records of the court.

9513. That would hold good only until the next revision of rent, of course?—The next revision of rent would, of course, take into account the better state of the farm when supplied with such buildings. Take an instance which has been very largely commented upon in Lancashire just lately. I think Mr. Wilson Fox had evidence of it when he was down in Lancashire. I allude to the very unsuitable, and, in many cases, insanitary buildings on dairy farms in which butter is made for the large towns, and in which cheese is made—they are utterly unsuitable; in fact, in some cases, the only place they have to keep cheese is under the bed in which the farmer and his wife sleep. Surely, in such a case, if good substantial buildings were erected on a farm having a suitable dairy and suitable cheese-rooms, that farm would be worth more rent to any one who might enter upon it than a farm with such accommodation as I have described.

9514. Do you think, in your district, at all events, the landowners would be equally willing to put their hands into their pockets in the future?—I am not speaking from a knowledge of their sentiments derived from discussing it with them largely; but I should say that, as reasonable men, they would have every inducement still to continue doing so.

Appointment of valuers.

9515. As to the appointment of assessors, do you put that into the hands of the county council?—It is the county council by the Bill, but the district councils were not then in existence, neither are they now, yet it is an open question whether the district council would not be the better body.

9516. Would you arrange that one of the assessors should be a representative of the landowners?—Yes.

9517. Is that in the Bill?—Yes, the registrar of the county court has the selection of these men from the list provided by the county council, but he is bound to see that one of them represents the landed interest, and is an estate or land agent, and that the other is a *boná fide* tenant farmer.

Insecurity of tenure.

9518. What is your explanation of this feeling of insecurity amongst tenants being very much greater in Lancashire and Cheshire than we have heard of in other parts of the country?—I believe the movement first commenced in this way; some men left Lancashire and went down into Essex, and they found that there where price had been affected through the price of wheat much sooner than price had been affected in our district timely remissions of rent had been refused to tenants, and that the result had been that the tenants had gone on hoping against hope that there would be a reaction in prices until the whole of their capital had gradually been absorbed, and simultaneously the land had been much impoverished. We felt that that was not a right state of things, and we wished if possible to prevent a repetition of such things in our own part of the country.

9519. Do you think that the farmer's capital is more insecure in Lancashire than in other parts of the country?—No, it is equally insecure everywhere, but the result is more painful in some other parts because the process has been in operation longer; they do not wish to go through the same painful experience that farmers in the wheat growing counties have gone through.

9520. We hear very little of this from witnesses representing those parts of the country?—It was a matter of notoriety at the time. I know that a member of the committee was sent down from the Preston district into the Essex district and the matter was a great deal discussed, and opinions expressed upon it at public meetings in the Preston district particularly.

9521. I assumed that the agitation in Lancashire was due to local causes, but I understand you to say that that was not so?—I did not want to weary you at too great length; but this is really what took place. It was after the failure, as we believed, of the conference in St. James's Hall in December 1892. I believe the idea of that conference came from Lancashire, and we expected the attention of the conference to have been mainly directed to the question of land tenure. We found it was not, and that it was directed to what we thought the impossible remedies, the unattainable remedies at all events I will say, of either protection or bi-metallism, and we thought it was time that we made some movement towards raising an agitation in what we believed to be the right direction.

Relations of landlords and tenants under Land Tenure Bill.

9522. (*Chairman.*) There is just one question that I omitted to ask you. Apparently, under Clause 31, any contract for the hire of land which is inconsistent with this Bill will in future be void. I rather gather from that that the operation of it would be this, that the owner of land if he lets at all must let subject to this Bill?—Yes.

9523. In other words if he admits a tenant at all the tenant must be a co-owner and not a tenant?—That is just so.

9524. It would forbid the creation of any tenancy in the future, a tenancy that is, such as we all mean?—Other than a judicial tenancy, yes.

9525. It must be a judicial tenancy with fixity of tenure?—Yes.

9526. And with the security of this Bill?—We do not want the Act to be permissive, we want it to be compulsory.

9527. Therefore, in future, there could be no such relation as that of landlord and tenant?—You might call the landlord what you like; you might call him rent receiver or rent charge owner.

9528. Such as we understand to be the relation of landlord and tenant would cease to exist; it would not be created in the future?—I suppose the relative position of landlord and tenant is without any such Bill as this very rapidly undergoing a change.

9529. If a landlord wished to let a portion of the demesne land, he could not let it for a year because the tenant who came in for a year would at once become entitled under this Bill to fixity of tenure for ever?—I am not quite sure, but I think there is a provision where the tenancy is for less than a year; but perhaps that is only about sub-letting.

9530. If he lets it for a year, the tenant comes in and at once becomes entitled to remain there for ever?—That probably is so.

9531. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Your Bill is compulsory upon all parties?—Yes.

9532. Notwithstanding any agreement to the contrary?—Any private agreement would have to be submitted to the court and recorded in their books.

9533. Your Bill is a long way beyond the Irish Act?—In that respect, yes, but I think the Irish Act has not proved perfect in its working.

Definition of fair rent.

9534. (*Mr. Giffen.*) What is a fair rent in the sense in which you use the term?—I take it to be a rent by which a farmer could live, and could pay fair wages to his labourers, and bring up his family in decent comfort at the then existing prices of whatever produce that land was calculated best to raise.

9535. How do you define a farmer living in decent comfort, and what is meant by "decent comfort," and terms of that kind?—I suppose common sense would have to come into that; the men who would fix such value and who would advise the judge in such a matter would be practical men.

9536. But these are all changeable terms in their meaning, and people have different ideas of what decent comfort is?—There are no such terms set forth in the Bill, I may say.

9537. You used the phrase "fair rent," and I am merely asking in what sense you use the words?—I trust to the fairness and the sound judgment of the men who would be called upon to say what was a fair rent; they would have no interest in the matter themselves.

Fixing of rent.

9538. By what principle would the county court judges, I think there are about 60 of them, be guided in fixing what is called a fair rent in the Bill; what would they have to go by?—I suppose the assessors, who would visit the holding, and who would know entirely all its conditions, would be very largely guided by the price of the various products in the market, and, therefore, they would know what rent the farmer might reasonably be expected to pay; they would be practical men.

9539. They would have some vague ideas, I suppose, as to how men of that class would like to live, or something of that kind; but it would all be very vague, it would not be exactly a principle?—One of the assessors would be a land agent who had been in the habit of letting farms, and the other would be a tenant who had been in the habit of living on farms.

9540. I suppose land agents are guided now very much by the fact of their knowledge as to what similar farms could let for under competition, but under the system you propose they would no longer have such a guide?—What would they be guided by?—Their own practical experience, I take it.

9541. Yes, but they must have some principles in fixing the rent. Now they have a practical experience in fixing competition rents; what would they have to guide them under the new system which you propose to establish?—I may say that farms are far from being let at present all by competition. Very frequently farms are not put up to competition at all. Take the instance I quoted of the largest of the few farms which my own family hold; there was no competition in that case. We wanted a tenant, a man we thought a substantial and likely man came to inquire about the farm, he went and looked over it with one or two of his own friends, and he placed upon it what he thought a fair value, and he came to negociate with myself about it. I had my own idea of what its value was, and we came to terms.

9542. But the element of competition exists all about you, and if that man who came to you could have got a farm on better terms elsewhere he might have gone there?—He was already in a farm which he was not compelled to leave.

9543. Still he had that opportunity of going to other farms under the system of competition which we have now?—I suppose there would still be this guide, that the judicial term would not end at the same time in every farm, and that these rents would be being fixed continually, and that one would be a guide to another.

Farmers' scale of living.

9544. You referred to the fact of the farmer being able to live upon his farm in decent comfort; is not one of the difficulties of the case that not only have farmers different ideas of what decent comfort is, but that the scale of living of a whole class changes from period to period?—It does change, of course, as every other class does; but I may say that the farmers in the district that I am most acquainted with are not open to any charge of extravagance in living. I believe the gravest charge that can be brought against them is the waste of time which some of them make by attending auction marts and that sort of thing too frequently. There has been no extravagance of living, and every member of the family is accustomed to work.

9545. But still the principle by which the county court judges would be guided, some of them not being very well acquainted with farming, would be somewhat vague?—I take it that in addition to the opinions of the two men especially appointed who would have a sense of responsibility strongly upon them, both parties would be able to call evidence into court as to the value of the farm.

9546. It seems to me that the point upon which you would have to call evidence would be the definition of the decent comfort in which the farmer was to live?—If a man had farmed a farm, say for five years, one of those judicial periods, and during that time he had not been able to make it pay, and if he could produce his accounts to show what the loss or otherwise was, that in itself would be very tangible evidence of what the farm was worth.

9547. If there were no accounts, and many farmers, I understand, have no accounts ?—Then the matter would be one of more difficulty, but I believe the tendency is for farmers to keep accounts. I myself for several years have urged upon farmers that they should adopt a simple method of book-keeping, because very largely farmers have to go to their landlords asking for remission of rent, and the landlord has had to take their word for it as to whether they have made money or not.

Fair wages of labourers.

9548. Would it not be a great convenience in carrying out these arrangements if the labourers were bound to work for fair wages ?—With us they do get what I suppose are considered fair wages, what some counties would consider good wages.

9549. And is a county court judge to be called upon to fix fair wages ?—No, I think the subject is sufficiently difficult without introducing a still more complicated one into it.

9550. Still that would be a convenience in enabling the fixation of fair rents ?—I think the fact exists that there is no complaint upon the part of the farm labourers in my own neighbourhood, and that they are satisfied with the wages they are getting, so that those might be taken as fair wages.

9551. But still circumstances might change, and change very materially in the course of a very few years, and the question of what is a fair wage for the labourers would come before the county court judge indirectly ?—In a manufacturing district like Lancashire or Cheshire, of course, the supply of labour would ebb and flow more or less according to the prosperity of the manufactures.

9552. That is to say, the wages of the labourers would be determined by competition ?—Yes, if you put it so, and we should at once see whether the wages were fair and attractive or not, because the supply of labour would decrease, and the farmers would have to offer a higher rate per day to attract them from the ironworks, say.

9553. You do not contend for fair prices for the produce of the farm ?—I do not contemplate any artificial regulation of prices.

9554. You only propose to regulate artificially the rent of the farm; in the midst of changing elements all around it, you propose to regulate artificially this one thing ?—I did not want to enter upon a long discussion on the foundation of this subject; but I take it that land stands in a totally different position to what many of these products do. The land of the country is limited in extent, and I think there is an obligation upon us to make the most of it, and to remove any barriers which prevent the full use of it.

Effect of security of tenure.

9555. Are you satisfied that the farmers' class would be any better off under the system that you propose, than they are now under the system of competition in many parts of the country where the farmers can choose and fix their own rents ?—I am perfectly satisfied that their position would be very much improved.

9556. Why ?—In the first place, they would have the feeling that injustice could not be done them, for they would be secure in their holdings, and they would feel that so long as they farmed their holdings to the benefit of the community, if you like to put it so, so long as they were farming that land well, they would not be vexaticusly disturbed, and they would be practically in the position of owners.

9557. But what security, practically, could they have better than the fact that if they are dispossessed of one farm they would get another on as good terms ? —But if a man has been a very high-class farmer, it is not such a simple thing to leave one farm and go to another; if he has been a very good farmer he leaves behind him a very large amount of capital which he cannot recoup himself for.

9558. If it be the case in many parts of the country that many of the farms are to let on advantageous terms, how would the farmer be better off under this system that you propose ?—I think I should say that he would have a much greater incentive to high class cultivation if he had an absolute security of tenure.

9559. Why, what is the incentive if he can get a farm on good terms elsewhere ?—What do you call good terms ? If a man takes a farm now from year to year you can quite understand that he is not in a position to embark his capital freely in it.

9560. Still we have been informed that in some parts of the country farms can be got easily, that is to say, there are more farms unoccupied than there are farmers to take them up; in those parts of the country how would a farmer be better off under the Bill which you propose ?—I fancy that that is really a proof of the contrary state of things. The fact of these farms not finding takers is a proof that the conditions on which they can be taken are not satisfactory.

9561. If, on the other hand, there are some parts of the country, where there are more farmers than there are farms to let, would not the effect of what you propose be, to give a special advantage to the particular farmers who happen to be in possession, making them so much better off than the rest of the community, and converting them, in effect, into part owners ?—If anyone is to have a preference, the man who is on the farm at the present moment is that man. Two men cannot occupy the same farm at the same time; the thing must have a beginning, and there is no doubt that the man on the farm would get the preference.

9562. Then you would give a special advantage to the people in possession, beyond the privileges which the rest of the community possess ?—I suppose that is so.

9563. Why should you take a part of the property from the present owners, and give it to one class ?—I do not admit that we are taking anything from any owner. What are we taking from him ?

9564. Then you are going to give them the property at a rent which does not take anything from the owner ?—I do not see what we are taking from the owner. We simply provide security for the man who does this necessary work, and it is necessary for the whole community that the land should be cultivated and cultivated to the very best advantage, and we want to offer every inducement to the tenant so to cultivate.

Fair rent.

9565. That is to say, you give him an opportunity of carrying on the process of cultivation at a rent less than the owner of the property could obtain in the open market ?—I do not know whether it would be a rent less or a rent more, but at a fair rent.

9566. It must either be the one or the other, or the sum that the owner would get ?—At a fair rent, which was fixed by some impartial person.

9567. Yes, but the difficulty is that at present a fair rent is a competition rent, that is to say, what the land would let for in the open market; and you have not given me, as far as I can judge, a definition of a fair rent in your sense ?—I think the definition is clear enough, it is what a man could live by. You will find now, all over the country, that a man who is farming land is not living; he is gradually losing bit by bit the whole of his capital.

9568. You cannot carry it further than that; you cannot give me a more precise definition ?—I think it is a perfectly satisfactory answer.

Procedure under Land Tenure Bill.

9569. Can you give me an idea as to the number of judges that would be necessary if this business was thrown upon County Courts ?—No. I think the fact that such a power exists would prevent any very large number of cases going into the court. I think the settlement of one case would act very much as a guide to private arrangements in the other cases. I do not anticipate that 1 per cent. of the cases would go into court.

9570. Has that been the case in Ireland ?—I cannot tell you.

9571. Is it not the case there that you have an immense number of judicial decisions, and a great amount of legal process at great expense; that whatever the advantages or disadvantages of the law in Ireland may be, yet still it has had this effect, that you have had a great amount of legal process ?—I am not very fully conversant with what has gone on in Ireland under this Act, but I do not anticipate that you would have that amount of litigation in England; of course, in Ireland, to begin with, there was perhaps greater injustice in the existing condition of things; the rents being paid there were rents which I think all parties admit now ought never to have been charged, and therefore it is perhaps natural that more litigation should take place there.

9572. And that is not true generally of the rents that you have to deal with in Lancashire ?—In nothing like the same degree, because the parties there were paying rents upon buildings and all sorts of things which they themselves had erected.

Wages of Lancashire labourers

9573. (*Mr. Clay.*) What is the general wage for the agricultural labourer in Lancashire?—The single men, who live in the house with the farmer and his family, and who eat at the same table with him, and live altogether in a similar manner, are getting wages from 20*l.* a year for youths, up to 30*l.* for skilled men. The married men who settle in the villages are employed week by week, and they are getting from 3*s.* 6*d.* a day, or 21*s.* a week; but they get more, 24*s.* a week in harvest-time and hay-time.

9574. Having carried your ideas so far as to fix a rent which would give the tenant a living wage, as you call it, have you any objection to fix the labourer's wage now, and to give him a good living wage?—I do not say the Court does directly fix the living wage to the farmer, but it does indirectly in fixing the rent.

9575. Is fixing the rent not a great factor in giving a man a good living wage, or a profit?—I think the Bill as it is drawn equally fixes the wage of the labourer now, as it does the remuneration of the farmer, because the Court would know what the current rate of wages in the district may be, and would say, after a man has paid his labourers, and after a man has lived on this farm, he can afford to pay so much in the shape of rent; therefore indirectly it fixes both, but directly neither.

9576. If it fixes the rent at a low rate, the farmer is better able to give the labourer a better wage?—Yes. There is no trouble on the score of wages at all in the counties which I am conversant with. There is no grievance in respect of wages now.

Security of tenure.

9577. The tenant farmer gets some compensation when he goes out of it?—Yes, except that the man might be the subject of vexatious dismissal, and so he does not farm the land with that energy or that free expenditure of capital that he would if he had fixity of tenure.

9578. You want the tenant to be permanent upon his land?—So long as he complies with the two cardinal conditions of paying the rent which has been adjudged to be a fair one under the circumstances, and so long as he farms the land properly. I give the landlord power to get quit of the tenant if he can show that the man is causing persistent waste by dilapidation of the land or buildings, &c.

Increased fertility by security of tenure.

9579. If the tenant were fixed upon the land do you think he would improve the land better than a shifting tenant?—I am quite certain that he would. I am quite certain of this, that there is not one acre in a hundred in this country that is farmed nearly up to the degree that it might be farmed, and that the produce of this country might be increased.

9580. Do you think your process would ensure better farming?—I do, otherwise I should not have attempted to draft any Bill on the subject.

9581. And higher fertility?—Yes.

Position of landlord and tenant.

9582. (*Mr. Little.*) I fail to understand upon what grounds you would transfer the property of the landlord to the present tenants?—I do not admit that there is any transfer of the property of the landlord to anyone. There is no such transfer.

9583. The landlord becomes a mere rent charger?—He retains all that he has ever had any right to, but he ceases to have the power to accrete to himself what he has in the past done in the shape of tenants' improvements.

9584. He has had the power to let as he pleased, for as long a time as he pleased, and for as short a time as he pleased?—Yes, and he has also had the power, unfortunately, to take to himself the improvements which have been made by the tenants.

9585. Are there many instances where he has taken to himself property that does not belong to him?—I did not purpose to dwell on the details of any of these matters; the other witnesses from the different counties, from our Federation, who will follow me, will go fully into those details.

Result of security of tenure.

9586. Who would be benefited by your bill beyond the sitting tenant?—The community, very largely.

9587. In what way?—By the increased productive power of the soil under the new condition of things.

9588. What proof have you that it would be increased?—That if a man feels absolutely secure he will get a return for what he invests, his investments in the land will be very much greater than they are now, when that is a very doubtful matter indeed.

9589. Is that not rather a gratuitous assumption; is it the case that where land is farmed by the owner it universally produces more than where it is farmed by tenants?—It depends under what circumstances the owner is farming it. There are a number of owners farming their land now because they have not found tenants, and they are probably farming it in a makeshift sort of way.

9590. I am not speaking of those. There are a considerable number of farmers still in the country who occupy their own land; is there any proof whatever that they grow more than tenant farmers?—I think, from my own observation locally, that these are the farms that are much the best cultivated.

9591. Is it the case in Ireland?—I am not acquainted with that country in detail; it is many years since I was over there.

Determination of fair rents.

9592. I think you have not laid down any principle upon which these fair rents could be fixed, except that the tenant should be able to pay his labourers and bring up a family in comfort. The bringing up of a family in comfort would depend upon the size of the family, would it not?—Yes, but I suppose if the family was too large to be profitably employed in the holding, they would drift away to other employments.

9593. In fixing the rent you would not go into the question of what family a man had?—No, I would not limit him to the size of the family he ought to have.

9594. Would you take this into consideration: that there is a great demand for farms in the neighbourhood at the time?—If there was, I suppose the valuers who fixed the rent would take all the circumstances into consideration.

9595. At the present time, I believe, there is a demand for farms, even in Lancashire?—There is a fair demand. They are all let so far as I know.

9596. Some are let at increased rents even at the present time?—I should be surprised to learn that.

9597. You cannot admit that; but suppose that the circumstances alter, and that there is a great demand for farms, would you, in fixing a fair rent, take into consideration the fact that half a dozen tenants would like to take this farm at the rent at which the tenant has it?—I suppose that where there is a great demand for farms, that would be some sort of evidence that farming in that neighbourhood was profitable.

9598. Then supposing the rent to be fixed at a sum which the farmer's neighbours think a low rent, would you allow the farmer then to sell the goodwill?—His goodwill would simply consist in the value of his own improvements.

Fair rents and competitive rents.

9599. His goodwill would consist in the difference between the fair rent-charge and the competition rent?—I do not see that.

9600. If the rent is fixed at 100*l.* a year, and someone else is willing to give 50*l.* a year more, you would transfer from the landlord to the tenant the power of taking that 50*l.* a year?—The power is given to the court to intervene in any case where it is thought that the amount between the outgoing tenant and the incoming tenant is in excess of a fair amount.

9601. The tenant has got something to sell?—Yes.

9602. Which is the difference between the fair rent and the competition rent?—No. I take it that all that the tenant has to sell is the increased value resulting from his own improvements on the farm.

9603. But is it not the fact that if a fair rent is fixed at 100*l.*, and there are half a dozen people who will give 150*l.* for it, the tenant has got something to sell in the fact that he has a goodwill, a valuable consideration to part with?—That is assuming that the men who had the rent to fix have not performed their work well.

9604. Suppose circumstances have changed in the period of five years for which the rent is fixed, the fair rent remains for five years, and in the first two years prices improve, and the land is worth so much more, the tenant then sells to somebody else on a rising market?—Under those circumstances he might for a short period sell what you would call his tenant right.

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9605. How would the incoming tenant under those circumstances be benefited?—It would be a speculation on the part of the incoming tenant.

9606. He would be in exactly the same position as another tenant whose rent has been raised by a landlord?—Except that the increase of rent, if he had paid such to the incoming tenant, would come up for revision, he would have paid a small sum more for one, two, or three years it might be.

9607. He has paid a capital sum down for what he considers a valuable consideration; then when it comes before the land court again would there not be a disposition on the part of the land court to say, this man has invested so much in this land, and he is part owner of it, having bought the tenant-right of the previous tenant?—I do not read it in that light, and that is not the view that I should expect the court to take.

The witness withdrew.

(For Mr. Smith's further evidence, *see* Question 9838.)

Adjourned to Thursday next at 12 o'clock.

Eighteenth Day.

Thursday, 1st March 1894.

PRESENT:

The RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.	CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.	ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.	JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.	GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.	WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.	WALTER HUME LONG, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.	CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*

R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
FREEMAN THOMAS, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. T. CARRINGTON SMITH re-called and further examined.

(For previous evidence *see* Question 8020.)

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Position of landlord and tenants.

9608. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think you said that you consider the depression of agriculture had been more severely felt by the tenants than by the landlords in your district?—Yes.

Rent.

9609. Do you consider that the present rents fairly represent the value of the land?—I think not, but those rents, by the temporary relief that is given by temporary remissions, do, I think, fairly represent the value of the land.

9610. How do you account for the fact that when the farms in your district are vacant there are so many applicants for them at the present rents, if the rent is not a fair rent?—I think my answer is limited to farms of a certain size, 200 acres.

9611. But you would agree that the rents in those cases are fair?—Unless temporary remissions are made up to we will say 10 per cent., I think they are in excess of the value of the land, but where that temporary remission is made, I think that the rents are fair.

Arrears of rent.

9612. But the rents are in no way in arrear?—On one estate that I was speaking of (I could give the figures) they are not in arrear at all, but there are many other cases where they are. I am prepared here with evidence to show how the rents have fallen in arrear, and how the cases have come before the Official Receivers in bankruptcy. I have here the reports of two Official Receivers bearing specially upon small holdings. In connexion with the question Mr. Chaplin put to me, I wished to fortify my opinion as to the working of the law of distress, and I took the step of writing to two Official Receivers in the Midland Counties and they have been good enough to place at my service, and the service of this Commission, the evidence that has come before them in the bankruptcy courts. I have also here the Law Reports for 1887, in which there is a case in point, which now gives the authority with respect to the law of distress. And, by the way, may I be allowed—the information has come to me since—to correct my opinion when I stated that the law of distress did not operate beyond 18 months back. I must correct that, because I am prepared here with the information that has been placed in my hands to show that it is quite common that two years' rent should be recovered. May I give the case which is now the legal authority. It meets the case of the small holder, if I may call Mr. Chaplin's attention to it. The case is at page 642 of the Law Reports, 1887. It is Bull in *re* Bew. That was a tenancy at 80*l.* a year; it was originally 75*l.*; the rent was raised to 80*l.*, and there was a provision in the agreement that one year's rent afore-hand should be recovered. In a short time the tenant became bankrupt. The landlord had put in his distress, and he had claimed 139*l.* 4*s.* 5*d.* That is to say, he had claimed under his agreement. The Official Receiver opposed the claim in the county court, and the county court judge decided in favour of the Official Receiver; that is to say, he only allowed by his judgment one year's rent, 80*l.*, to the landlord. The landlord took this case up to the Queen's Bench Division, and from the time of 1887 the decision given here, as reported, is the law. The case was heard and Mr. Justice Matthew, and Mr. Justice Cave gave their decision. They reversed the decision of the county court and gave the whole of the amount claimed by the landlord under the distress, which was 139*l.* 4*s.* 5*d.*

The law of distress.

9613. (*Viscount Cobham.*) That was two years' rent, was it not?—It was not quite two years, but it might have been. May I go on with some evidence from the Official Receivers?

9614. Do you mean as to that same point?—Precisely the same point.

9615. That seems to be pretty conclusive as to that point?—Yes.

9616. (*Mr. Dalton.*) It has not been appealed against?—It has not been appealed against.

9617. (*Mr. Channing.*) May I ask whether your intention in quoting from the Official Receivers is not to

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show the practical operation of the Law of Distress rather than the law itself with regard to it?—It is both really, because here I am prepared with a case where two years' rent has been recovered.

9618. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Just mention the result of the case?—" On the 3rd instant the landlord distrained " for 429*l.* 12*s.* 4*d.*, being the two years' rent of the " farm to the 29th September next, and also for " 17*l.* 11*s.* 7*d.* due for tithes, due 1st of January last. " The amount realised from the sale was 467*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.*, " which was insufficient to pay the rent, tithe, and " costs of distress." The second report which I have here brings out the fact that the tenants have always been in arrear. I must ask, please, that no names be given here.

9619. Are these cases that fell within your own knowledge?—No, but they come to me directly from the Official Receiver, and they are official reports.

9620. Are you speaking of Staffordshire?—I am speaking really of a larger district than Staffordshire, because of the two Official Receivers who have placed this information at my disposal one lives at Shrewsbury and the other at Derby, but they take the whole district, including the whole county of Staffordshire.

9621. You need not give the names, of course?—Mr. so-and-so " filed his petition in consequence of a " distress for rent having been levied upon his effects. " He has occupied land under his present landlord for " 17 or 18 years, having increased his holding from " time to time until he has now 190 acres (of which " about 150 acres are grass land), at a gross rental of " 374*l.* On the 28th August last there was owing for " rent and arrears up to the previous Lady Day (the " Lady Day rent is by custom payable in June), a sum " of 352*l.*, and a distress was on the 28th August levied " for such rent and arrears, the bankrupt having then " completed his harvest. On the same day as the " distress the landlord, under a clause in the tenancy " agreement, gave notice requiring immediate payment " of the rent coming due at 29th September following " (but by custom payable at Christmas), and on the " 30th August he caused a distress for that rent (187*l.*) " to be made, making a total of 539*l.* so distrained " for, representing practically one and a half year's " rent." I may say that in one case there was no dividend whatever, and in the other there was a very small one. May I now take the other Official Receiver's report? I will now take two cases that represent the small holdings: Date of petition, December 1892, so-and-so:—" At starting had 200*l.*" This is the Official Receiver's report; it is in manuscript here, but I have verified it. " Had prior to that assisted his father, a " farmer. Signed an agreement under which rent due " in advance. In November 1892, landlord distrained " for 160*l.*=80*l.*, half-year March to September 1892, " and 80*l.*, half-year September 1892, to March 1893, " due in advance. This he recovered. Creditors for " 459*l.* 5*s.* 7*d.* received dividend of 2*s.* 9¾*d.* Had " two farms, one farm was 40 acres and the second " about 80 acres."

9622. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Was that rent due in advance?—Rent due in advance by agreement and recovered by distress. The other case was "entered March 1889"—these are quite recent cases—" date of petition September 1892. The debtor was previously a game-keeper," in point of fact the farm was let by his previous employer. " Wife had about 280*l.* Took farm at rent " of 45*l.* per annum, payable in advance. Resorted to " money lenders, and August 1892 gave a bill of sale " for 40*l.* At time of bankruptcy landlord had dis- " trained, and bill of sale holder had seized. Landlord " received his rent. Bill of sale holder compromised. " Unsecured creditors 345*l.* 0*s.* 10*d.* Dividend 1*d.* in " the £." There are a lot more cases, but I think I need not trouble you with them. The same Official Receiver who had furnished me with that evidence asks me if you will allow him to express an opinion with respect to giving bills of sale, and being an experienced lawyer, he suggests that there should be some check similar to that already existing under the law of settlement, under which the bill of sale man would have his wings a little clipped. He suggests that, supposing the law of distress should be done away with entirely, it would be advisable in the public interest, and in the interest of the landlords, that a bill of sale should be inoperative like a settlement is, unless it can be proved that at the time of taking the bill of sale the person who gave it was able to pay all his debts without the aid of the property comprised in the bill of sale.

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9623. (*Viscount Cobham.*) That is applicable to the law of bills of sale generally?—Yes.

9624. Not specially to farmers?—Not specially to farmers.

9625. That is rather a large question?—It is.

9626. (*Mr. Dalton.*) It is only in cases of settlements?—There is the existing law in cases of settlement, and he asks for an analogous law in cases of bills of sale. I must say that my own opinion is decidedly in favour of that expression of opinion.

Rates.

9627. Have the rates in the £ gone up or down in your district?—They have temporarily gone down because of the help we have received from the Imperial funds, but I can see that the time is coming when the help from the Imperial funds will not be so great as now, and I think it is probable that the rates will go up.

9628. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Under the County Council?—And others, we shall have a lot of councils now.

9629. Has the charge for roads increased?—The charge for roads is likely to increase greatly, because the public are determined to have better roads. In my own county our expenditure on the main roads—and of course those are the only roads under us—is 70,000*l.* a year. I am speaking now as a member of the Highway and Main Roads Committee.

9630. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Can you say how far they have gone down or up?—Speaking of my own parish?

9631. Yes?—My own parish has been so fortunate as to escape any new rates; speaking of my own parish the rates are rather less than they were 20 years ago.

9632. Have you any figures? Can you give me how much difference in the pound?—Yes, I can, approximately about 1*s.* 1*d.* I am speaking now of the poor rates; I am not speaking now of the highway rate, or of the voluntary church rate, or of anything of that kind.

9633. Taking the whole of your compulsory rates together what do they amount to in the pound in your parish?—In my own parish, what are properly called the poor rates, for these last two years, would not average more than 1*s.* 1*d.* in the pound.

9634. What were they before the passing of the Local Government Act?—They were under 1*s.* 3*d.* before the passing of the Local Government Act.

9635. Has your county rate gone up?—No.

9636. Has it gone down?—It has gone down.

9637. How much?—I am afraid I cannot answer that question.

9638. Has your highway rate gone up?—We have no main roads in our parish. It is a small parish, and it is divided into two townships. The rates have not gone up.

9639. Have they gone down?—They are about the same.

9640. About how much is the highway rate?—About 3*d.* in the pound.

9641. And the county rate; about how much in the pound is that?—I am afraid I cannot tell you; but the county rate would be included in the poor rate.

9642. Then they only come to 1*s.* 4*d.*; that is, 1*s.* 1*d.* the poor rate and 3*d.* for the highway rate?—Yes; but perhaps I ought to add that although church rates, of course, are not legal, we pay a voluntary church rate, and we also subscribe.

9643. But the compulsory rates are 1*s.* 4*d.* in the pound?—That would cover the whole.

9644. (*Mr. Lambert.*) You have been in occupation of your farm 38 years, I believe?—Yes.

Rent.

9645. Could you give us any idea whether the rent was increased from the beginning of your tenancy up to, say, 1875; or something like that?—When I took my farm in 1856, I took it at a rent in advance of the previous tenant, who by the way, had come to grief. My rent has not been increased except temporarily, when the landlord had borrowed money for improvement on the farm, and that money I agreed, by a clause added to my agreement, to pay off at the rate of 7 per cent.

9646–7. (*Viscount Cobham.*) When was that?—That would be 30 years ago, I should say; in any case the time of the repayments of the loan expired some time ago. I continued to pay principal and interest on the drainage until its repayment was finished; then, of course, the extra charge upon me ceased. Then I must explain that the rent has been slightly lowered, inasmuch as part of my land was chargeable with tithe, and when the alteration in the law with respect to the payment of tithe was made, the landlord consented not to ask me to pay the tithe; so that the reduction in rent was equal to about 1*s*. an acre on the whole of my holding, and now my rent is 1*s*. an acre less than it was when I began in 1856, although more than it was previous to 1856.

9648. (*Mr. Lambert.*) At how much increase on the rent prior to 1856, did you take the farm?—How much was my rent in advance of the previous tenants?

9649. Yes?—About 2*s*. 6*d*. an acre.

9650. What would that be per cent.?—The rental is now 32*s*. 6*d*.

Permanent improvements.

9651. You paid 7 per cent. for the improvement that your landlord made, which paid off both principal and interest?—That is so, with respect to the drainage.

9652. Has that improvement added to the value of the estate?—Yes; in buildings, certainly.

9653. Have you paid the whole of the cost—principal and interest?—Yes; at the rate of 7 per cent., covering both, but I paid no interest on the buildings, the provision of which was included in the agreement of tenancy.

9654. So that practically, you have paid for all this improvement?—Yes, that is so, as regards drainage.

9655. And it now becomes the property of the landlord?—It is now the property of the landlord.

9656. Therefore, you yourself have paid for the permanent improvement of your landlord's property?—Yes; if you like to put it so, it is so.

9657. Do you expect to get any compensation for that at the end of your tenancy?—No, I should never think of asking for it.

Reduction of rent.

9658. You say the rents have been reduced about 10 or 12 per cent. in your district?—Yes. May I state what I have done since my last examination. I expressed an opinion then that the rents in my county had been reduced 10 per cent. I thought I could perceive that the opinion of the Commission was, that mine was an optimistic statement; so I wrote to the Board of Inland Revenue here, asking whether they would allow the surveyor of taxes, in my own county, to place his opinion at my service for this purpose, and the Board of Inland Revenue gave instructions to the Surveyor of Taxes to place the information within his office at the service of this Commission. May I give it?

9659. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Certainly?—He could not give me all the figures I asked for, but he says: "From "a statistical return prepared for head office, I find the "following comparisons of assessments on lands. I "cannot go beyond 1889-90, as the returns have been "destroyed." So that this is only a comparative statement between the two returns for 1889-90 and 1892-93. This surveyor has jurisdiction over two districts in Shropshire and five districts in Staffordshire, and he gives Schedule A for 1889-90 at 551,455*l*.

9660. I think your statement was that the fall in rents since the depression began had been 10 per cent. or thereabouts?—It is so.

9661. This hardly bears upon that, does it?—It only bears upon part of the time.

9662. The last three years only?—That is so.

9663. I hardly think that that would be sufficient to confirm your statement or otherwise?—For what it is worth I think it confirms it. Of course, as you are aware, the assessments run for three years. The return would be made last year. It would bring in last year fully. As I have said, Schedule A for 1889-90 was 551,455*l*; for 1892-93 it was 541,620*l*., which represents a fall of 1¾ per cent. Then I asked him for his expression of opinion as to whether these assessments fairly represent the rentals. He says: "You may take the assessments "as fairly representing the annual rents payable, as, "although the smaller tenants do not usually make "returns, the information is obtained from the owners," so that the whole of the agricultural land is dealt with in this return.

9664-7. Of course that would omit any temporary reduction in consequence of the bad season of last year?—I feel bound to call the attention of the Commission to that, and so I should like to read what he says about that: "These figures do not fully represent the actual "reductions in rent, as of late years the landlords have "from year to year given large temporary rent remis- "sions from the rents payable." I am glad to have the opportunity of adding that. (*See* Appendix A., XXVII.)

9668. Could you give us the figures for the earliest year you have mentioned—1888?—I cannot go back further than this return.

9668*a*. What years does that compare?—It compares 1893 with 1890, you may say.

9669. (*Mr. Lambert.*) The rents, in your opinion, have been reduced in the last 15 years, about 10 or 12 per cent., I understand?—Certainly, not more, taking the whole of the county.

Dairy farming.

9670. What is the principal produce that you sell in your district?—Dairy produce.

9671. Has that decreased in value?—Very much.

9672. What is the proportion?—I have made cheese for 35 years consecutively on the same holding. I took out my figures for the first 28 years; and found that I made 7½*d*. a pound on the whole of the cheese during that 28 years: the seven following years up to last year, or eight, I think it is; it would be a little under 6*d*. per pound. So there you get the proportion of fall in the article of cheese. But I have changed my practice, and have now taken to milk selling. I am unable to say how that will go on, but I am inclined to think it will make more money considerably than making cheese.

9673. Do you sell beef and mutton?—Yes.

Fall in prices.

9674. Has that depreciated in value?—Considerably; especially the sort of beef that a dairy farmer makes; that is to say, cow beef.

9675. I do not want you to go into too specific particulars, but taking it as a general statement, how much per cent. would be the average reduction of the produce that you have to sell?—I must eliminate corn altogether, because I have ceased to sell corn. Covering meat and dairy products, and spare store stock, I think the fall—I must compare with a certain date—from a high point in the seventies——

9676. Yes; from the maximum?—It is at least 25 per cent.; but under the items of beef and mutton, compared with the beginning of my tenancy in 1856, I think there is no fall at all, except in cow beef.

9677. Did you, in the seventies, derive any benefit from selling corn, did you make any profit on selling corn?—For a short time I did.

Reduction in rent and value of produce.

9678. Then the rents have decreased about 10 or 12 per cent., and the value of agricultural produce has depreciated 25 per cent.?—Yes.

9679. Can you give us any reason why the rents have not fallen in proportion to the value of agricultural produce?—The means of production have been cheapened, so that it is hardly fair, from my point of view, to compare the fall in rents with the fall in produce, inasmuch as by the help of imported foods I can produce both dairy products and meat more cheaply than I could before those foreign products were as cheap as they are now.

9680. Does that make the whole of the difference—50 per cent. difference between the value of agricultural produce and rents?—50 per cent.?

9681. I must make that clear; the rents have depreciated about 12 per cent., taking the maximum, and the agricultural produce has depreciated 25 per cent.; therefore agricultural produce has depreciated exactly double as much as rents have?—I understand now; but, if you please, I must add the proviso that the means of production have been cheapened.

9682. I quite agree, but is it to that degree?—Yes, I think so.

9683. You said that a decreased rent invariably followed a fresh tenancy; for what reason is that?—I think I did not say so. In my précis I have stated a case where a farm of 150 acres is now becoming vacant because the tenant asked for a reduction of 30*l*. a year, inasmuch as it is too dear, the rental being 2*l*. an acre, and the tenant not being able to get that reduction will leave this next Lady-Day. But there are several applicants for the farm at the old rent.

9684. Are we to understand that at the present moment, if a farm is to be let, there would be naturally, if the farm were put up to competition, no decrease in the rent?—There would be no decrease in small farms

9685. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I see, this is what you stated:—"(*Q.*) In the case of medium-sized farms, "particularly pasture, what has happened?—(*A.*) "There has been no fall at all"?—Thank you; it is in my previous examination. I think I have stated that there is a fall of 20 per cent. in large farms, have I not?

9686. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Did you not state to-day that you thought the rent was greater than the value of the land?—Except where temporary remissions have been made. It comes to this then: I have pledged myself that a temporary remission of 10 per cent. about meets the necessary fall, but that where the temporary remission is not made the rental is 10 per cent. in excess of the value. That is what my opinion comes to.

9687. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Has that 10 per cent. been remitted on the majority of the farms?—I am afraid not.

Arrears of rent.

9688. To what do you ascribe the arrears of rent that are due from the tenant to the landlord?—To several causes; primarily, to the fact that the existence of the law of distress invites the competition of men to take farms who have not sufficient capital to manage farms; secondly, to the unhappy practice of some landlords of allowing arrears of rent to accumulate. The latter, I have a very strong opinion myself, is a great mistake. It is absolute unkindness and not kindness on the landlord's part to allow rent to come in arrear.

9689. What would be the meaning of rent coming in arrear; would it not be that too much rent was offered to be paid in the first instance?—Sometimes.

9690. Would that not be it in the majority of cases?—In a great number of cases, probably in the majority.

Compensation for improvements.

9691. I understand you are in favour of giving to the tenant compensation for any improvement that adds to the letable value of his holding?—I am.

9692. Do you think it would be probable that any tenant would make an expensive improvement on worthless land?—There is no worthless land in cultivation in England in my judgment.

Uncultivated land.

9693. I think you heard some evidence the last time you were here to the effect that there were several farms out of cultivation, or next door to it?—I have no knowledge of such cases, and I am more than an agnostic, I am an unbeliever of such cases.

9694. You do not think it would be likely or probable that any tenant would make an improvement without very carefully estimating as to what its probable effect would be upon the holding?—Certainly he would not.

Railway rates.

9695. Have you any instance of the railway rates for milk being increased?—Yes, I have my own.

9696. Could you give it us very shortly?—At the beginning of last year the railway rates were very largely increased. We held in my own neighbourhood antagonist meetings, and one of the best meetings I ever attended was one held in my own neighbourhood. As a result of the agitation some of the railways went back to what was called the old rate, but as a matter of fact although the railways claim they have gone back to the old rate for the carriage of milk, they have increased that rate by 6¼ per cent., inasmuch as now they charge per Imperial gallon and not per barn gallon; that is to say, they carry now 16 gallons for the same rate that they previously carried 17. In my own case—I am a new beginner—I consider that my year's charge will amount to 120*l.* paid for carriage to the railway, and that I shall have to pay 6¼ per cent. advance from the old rate in consequence of this change from the barn gallon to the Imperial gallon.

Land laid down to grass.

9697. You say the fall in rents would have been much greater had not a large amount of arable land been laid down to permanent pasture; does the law at the present moment afford an incentive to farmers to lay down land to permanent pasture?—No, it is a complete speculation; in my own case it was a speculation which has been a profitable one, inasmuch as I have made my landlord make terms with me.

9698. Have you formed any opinion as to how improvements should be assessed at the end of a tenancy?—I am quite content to take the definition of an improvement in the Agricultural Holdings Act, 1883; t is: "the value to the incoming tenant."

Official valuers.

9699. You have missed the point of my question: Have you formed any opinion as to how, by what means, those improvements should be valued?—By arbitration; I have expressed my opinion.

9700. Are you in favour of official valuers or such appointments?—I must confess that I am in favour of an official umpire in case of the original arbitrators not agreeing.

Reduction and remission of rent.

9701. (*Mr. Channing.*) In putting the permanent reductions of rent at 10 per cent. or 12 per cent., you said that the figures you gave from the Official Receivers, or from whatever authority they came, did not take account of temporary remissions?—That is so. They were from the Surveyor of Taxes.

9702. Can you give us any idea as to the scale of temporary remissions; were they generally the 10 per cent. or the 15 per cent. that you referred to just now, or have they been more or less?—On my own estate there have been no remissions for many years, but in the new tenancies there has been a reduction, and in some of the old ones, but not in all.

9703. Your attention must have been drawn to a good many complaints of the insecurity which the tenants feel under this system of temporary remissions?—That is so.

9704. They would prefer to have the rents adjusted permanently?—There is no doubt a man would prefer to have a permanent reduction instead of simply a temporary one.

9705. Your experience in Staffordshire rather confirms the view that the old tenants who remain in their holdings do not get as large reductions of rent as have to be made in the case of new tenants?—That is so.

9706. How far do you think Parliament and the State have a right to interfere with rents; would you carry the interference with rent further than merely the protection of the tenant's improvements?—No; I would hold that the tenant and the landlord should be free to make their own bargains, but that in order that they may be able to make their bargains on equal terms I would abolish the law of distress in the first instance, so that the landlord and the tenant should be on an equal platform in making the original bargain as to rent, and I would make the compensation for unexhausted improvements indefeasable, so that at the conclusion of the bargain the tenant should be entitled to receive all the added value he had given by his acts to the property, just as the landlord is entitled to recover for the dilapidations made by the tenant.

The law of distress.

Compensation for improvements.

9707. I understand you would give him the right of obtaining that compensation whether he quitted or not at the determination of a tenancy?—Certainly.

9708. How would you secure the tenant in that case, supposing that his landlord wished—I do not know that it would often occur—to raise the rent immediately after?—Before the rent could be raised the tenant would be in a position to recover from the landlord the added value which the act of the tenant had given to the property; consequently it would follow that the tenant, having that power of protection, the rents would not be raised unless the value of the land, irrespective of the tenant's action, had gone up.

9709. How do you suppose it will work out, that is really what I want to come to; you would allow the tenant to get his compensation without the necessity of quitting his farm if the tenancy was determined and new terms were being arranged, would you contemplate his having cash down for his improvement at that time, and then give the owner the right to charge what rent he liked having paid for the improvements?—If the rent was interfered with by the landlord, the tenant wishing to continue as tenant?

9710. Yes?—I would: that is to say, the landlord would have to pay the capital value of the improvement recognised by its adding to the letting value before the landlord could raise the rent on the tenant, that is to say, the landlord could not raise the rent on the tenant's improvements.

9711. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Is that to include what is commonly known as the tenant right?—I would not apprehend that it would; with respect to the unconsumed hay and straw and anything of that kind do you mean?

9712. Yes?—No, that would be a question between the landlord and the tenant; it might be that the landlord would do something else.

9713. You are referring to more or less permanent improvements?—Yes.

9714. (*Mr. Channing.*) In order to solve this problem you suggested one method, namely, that the landlord should pay cash down for these improvements, and then be able to charge the commercial rent, and you think that is a fair arrangement; but are you aware that Sir James Caird, in order to meet that difficulty, also suggested the method of distributing the compensation over a number of years in the form of a reduction of rent? What is your opinion of that suggestion?—Where did Sir James Caird make that suggestion?

9715. That was one of his suggestions made in 1883 when the Agricultural Holdings Bill was before Parliament?—Do I understand this—that Sir James Caird suggested that the rental of a farm should be reduced to the tenant because he had made certain improvements?

9716. That when he remained in his holding the compensation for his past improvements instead of being paid cash down, as you suggest, should be paid in the form of a reduction of rent?—I was not aware that he had made that suggestion.

9717. Then you have probably not formed an opinion upon the point?—I have not.

Fixity of tenure.

9718. You think the sitting tenant would obtain full protection, I understand, without fixity of tenure?—Yes.

9719. Because in your scheme he would have cash down for his improvements at the time the rent was being fixed, and he would not need any further protection?—I certainly should object to fixity of tenure.

The law of distress.

9720. Now about your objection to the law of distress; as I understand your evidence it is not merely that you object to the competition of men who really cannot farm well and therefore artificially raise the price of farms, but you object to it on general principles—you think it leads to bad farming?—Certainly.

9721. Do you think it would be better for a man with a small capital to take a small farm which is proportionate to his capital, and work it well, than for him to take a large farm, and work it on the extra credit that he gets from the landlord owing to the law of distress?—Certainly.

9722. It leads to bad farming; that is your real objection to it, is it not?—That is one of my objections.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

9723. Now about the procedure under the Agricultural Holdings Act; as I understand you think that the schedules and definitions in detail rather complicate matters, and make it more difficult to work the Act well?—I consider the schedules absolutely useless and harmful.

Official valuers.

9724. That it would be far better to give a free hand to a good valuer to say how much value had been added to the farm by the improvements executed by a tenant?—Yes.

9725. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do you mean that that should be the sole consideration guiding the valuer?—Yes.

9726. (*Mr. Channing.*) Then you would approve of valuers being selected and that competent men should be specially selected for a duty of that kind; as I understand your idea is that they should be chosen by the County Council, is it not?—I think myself that the appointment of official umpires by the County Council would work well. I think I would leave the landlord and tenant as now to appoint their arbitrators in the first instance and then call in an official referee to decide. He would then become an official umpire, whereas now the arbitrators appoint their own umpire.

9727. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) That can be done now, can it not; under the existing law there is an appeal to the Board of Agriculture?—There is an appeal, but I would make it obligatory. I think myself that the County Council would be a desirable body to fix within the area of its authority upon certain persons to act as official umpires to decide in case of dispute.

9728. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do you prefer the County Council to the Board of Agriculture who nominate at present under the Act?—Yes, for this reason: that you must have local men to deal with the local practice; farming varies so differently.

9729. (*Mr. Little.*) You have said an appeal, but it is on the application of either party that the official referee is now appointed?—Yes, I must correct myself.

9730. (*Mr. Channing.*) Are you aware that Sir Thomas Acland in a Bill which he introduced some years ago suggested that the whole of this compensation should be determined by the county court judge unless the parties otherwise agreed, by a single judicial tribunal; have you formed any opinion about that?—I take it there that the county court would be simply the court of justice, but that the county court judge could not form an opinion; he could not be the valuer; he must only be the judge to enforce the law.

9731. You do not think a county court judge with two assessors would be a good tribunal to decide these matters then, as perhaps you are aware was suggested originally by the Farmers' Alliance some years ago, and which is the main proposal of a Bill now before Parliament called the Land Tenure Bill?—I look upon the interference of a judicial authority as simply an interference to enforce the law, not to arrive at the facts. I would leave the determination of the facts to the arbitrators appointed by the landlord and tenant, or in case of their not agreeing to an official referee. I really have not made up my mind very definitely whether that official referee would be better appointed by the Board of Agriculture or by the County Council.

Custom in Scotland as to referee.

9732. Are you aware that an Act was passed for Scotland fixing the procedure by a single referee? Do you not think that if a single agricultural referee taken, as I suggest in the proposal which I have laid before Parliament, from an official list, were appointed to determine these questions unless the parties otherwise agree, that would be a cheaper way of dealing with it than the method at present adopted? If you had a single referee taken from such a list of official valuers as you suggest appointed by the County Council, and if necessary, approved by the Board of Agriculture, would you like to trust valuations to his decision?—For myself I should.

Compensation for improvements.

9733. Now just go back for one moment to one point that I omitted about the sitting tenant. You are aware that a man's improvements can be confiscated by a failure to reduce the rents sufficiently as well as by an increase of rent, are you not?—Quite aware.

9734. Your proposal, therefore, that the landlord should pay the compensation at the time in settling the new rent, would cover both cases?—Yes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

9735. And it is meant to do so. Now I should like to ask you a question as to the defects of the Agricultural Holdings Act in connection with your objection to all this complication of items. Your attention, I dare say, has been drawn to a case brought before the courts, and just decided, which has taken three years to decide; after having gone through various courts in which, if your suggestion of a single procedure to determine the added value had been adopted, justice might have been obtained promptly, whereas now the result has been unsatisfactory to the tenant, owing to the technicalities of the Act, is not that so?—If you are alluding to the case of *Farquharson* v. *Morgan* I am here prepared with the facts. I have been to the *Times* office this morning to get the *Times* report, inasmuch as it appeared to me that that was the best authority to take. The case was reported in the *Times* of the 5th of last month.

"Farquharson v. Morgan."

9736. The principal point of that case is this, is it not: that it was agreed between the tenant and the landlord in the lease that items, which are not technically included in the schedules and provisions of the Agricultural Holdings Act, should be compensated for under the procedure of the Agricultural Holdings Act, yet the tenant failed in obtaining compensation for those improvements, although protected by the lease?—He not only failed, but he has been exposed to litigation for three years, and now has got an adverse decision given in the Court of Appeal by Lord Halsbury, Lord Justice Davey, and Lord Justice Lopes. The tenant having succeeded in convincing the County Court judge that the award was a correct one, the landlord appealed against the enforcement of the award, and took the tenant to a Divisional Court, and two judges (or Lords Justices) there upheld the decision of the County Court judge. Then the landlord appealed to the Court of Appeal, and Lord Halsbury and the two Lords Justices named, took time to consider their judgments, and all three gave written judgments. They held with great regret, that inasmuch as certain compensation, not included in this Act or touched on in the schedules, was included in the award, although that compensation was separately specified, the decision must go against the tenant and in favour of the landlord.

9737. (*Viscount Cobham.*) That inclusion made the whole award bad?—It made the award practically outside the Act and bad.

9738. (*Mr. Channing.*) I think you understand that decision of the judges was that the County Court judge could not make an order to enforce the award under the 24th section of the Agricultural Holdings Act, because the award included items which the Agricultural Holdings Act did not provide for?—Not in these schedules, although there is an agreement that the landlord should pay; probably the landlord will pay in another way.

9739. I am not entering into the conduct of the landlord at all. The point of this case is that the defining of the different details for which compensation can be paid under the Agricultural Holdings Act—the close defining and limitation of these details leads to an injustice of this kind—that a County Court judge is unable to enforce an award which includes these items, and therefore the compensation is defeated in its actual enforcement, is not that so?—That is so. Certainly it is not the province of Parliament to lay down how land shall be farmed. Parliament has endeavoured to do what is entirely *ultra vires* in fixing the schedules of this Act.

Reduction of rent.

9740. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Might I ask you whether the farmers in your district are satisfied with the reductions of rent that have been made?—No, they are not satisfied. To speak of my own neighbourhood I think that farmers being honest men generally, think that a reduction of something like 10 per cent. would meet the circumstances of the times.

9741. Have they applied for a further reduction?—In my own case I have not.

9742. You have not?—No.

9743. Have many of the tenants, do you know?—Yes, I have given a case here—I call it an unfortunate case—where a tenant and occupier of a farm of 150 acres of which the rent is 300*l.* applied for a reduction of 30*l.*, the landlord refused the reduction and the tenant will go next Lady Day.

9744. Do you think it possible for these tenants to make their rents out of their holdings, considering the present exceptionally low prices of everything?—You see that is a general question. I do not think farmers who have a large proportion of arable land could make their rents with a reduction of 10 per cent. My opinion is pledged to the whole of the county which includes a very large proportion of grass land, and I honestly think myself that if the rentals in Staffordshire were reduced 10 per cent. on land permanently the reduction would meet the circumstances of the case. In some cases the reduction would be 20 per cent., in some cases none at all.

9745. (*Viscount Cobham.*) It would be an average of 10 per cent.?—An average.

9746. (*Mr. Long.*) Is that upon a rental already reduced or upon rents which have in the main not been reduced materially?—Of course, in cases where rents were advanced during the seventies it would not meet the case, but where rents were not interfered with we will say from the level previous to the rise in the seventies the 10 per cent. reduction would I think meet the circumstances of the case.

9747. Has there not been a heavy reduction in Staffordshire since 1879?—No.

9748. Then it would be practically on rents which have not been interfered with?—Practically so.

9749. Your remark would not apply to cases where there have been reductions of 15 per cent. or 30 per cent. between 1879 and now?—I know of none in Staffordshire up to 30 per cent.

9750. You would not mean it to apply generally to those cases?—I do not think there are such cases in Staffordshire.

9751. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Were the rents in your district high, low, or moderate 20 years ago, when prices were 30 per cent. higher?—I think I may claim for the landlords in Staffordshire that they did not greatly advance their rents during the good times of the seventies.

9752. What was the interest, do you think, farmers got on their farming capital 20 years ago?—My own balance sheets do not show that I ever got more than 10 per cent.

9753. Twenty years ago?—No.

9754. And to-day?—I have been before the Income Tax Commissioners two or three times, or rather I ought to say, I have been before the surveyor and he has said, "Your statement is so correct that you need not go before the Commissioners," and the Commissioners have allowed it and returned my Income Tax. That shows that I proved to them that I made no profit.

Tenants' capital.

9755. Does the land in your district in any way suffer for want of capital?—That is the case with some farms certainly, but I do not think greatly except in cases where the tenant has entered upon his occupation with an insufficiency of capital in the first instance.

Tenants on large and small estates.

9756. Do you find as a rule that tenants are better treated on large estates than they are on small estates?—That is a very difficult question to answer. On many large estates the tenants are well treated there is not a doubt, and I think as a tenant that I would prefer to hold under a large owner than under a small one. But men vary so differently. I know plenty of small owners who are good landlords, and I know some large estates where the agents really manage their property so that the tenants are badly treated. I know one case where the agent openly boasts that he has never reduced the rent on any farm on the estate, and will not do it.

Law of entail.

9757. Do you think the law of entail to be of advantage or disadvantage to tenants of an entailed estate?—It is not a disadvantage to the tenant; it is to the landlord.

9758. It is not a disadvantage to the tenant?—I do not think it is to the tenant; perhaps I must modify my answer there, excepting in the case of heavy mortgages under which the landlord is not able to do the landlord's work; otherwise the tenancy under the law of entail is a more dependable tenancy for the tenant than it is where estates change hands.

Selling value of land in Staffordshire.

9759. (*Mr. Everett.*) Has not the selling value of land in Staffordshire deteriorated more than 10 per cent. as compared with 15 years ago, or 20 years ago? I am under the impression that I have heard of cases where it has depreciated a good deal more than 50 per cent.?—In Staffordshire?

9760. Yes?—I know of no such cases. I think I have stated that on the larger arable farms 20 per cent. would be the reduction in annual value.

9761. (*Viscount Cobham.*) The question was as to the selling value, but I presume you think it follows?—I think it follows that there would be 20 per cent. reduction in the selling value.

Compensation for improvements.

9762. (*Mr. Everett.*) In regard to the law of compensation, I understand you to desire that the improving tenant shall be entitled to the value of the improvements he has made, but that the law should avoid going into detail of specification and leave that to the actual valuers who view the estate?—Yes.

9763. Do you not think it would be a good thing if the tenure of every farm were entered upon with a written description of the condition of every field to be kept for comparison when the tenant goes out?—It would be useful information, but it would be only useful information, inasmuch as you could not depend upon having the same valuers when you go out as those who made the tabulated statement to begin with. If you could keep them in perpetual life and in the same description of efficiency then it would be useful.

9764. Still, as regards cleanness, for instance, that is a matter of fact, not a matter of opinion, to be clean from twitch and those things?—No doubt it is.

Cross-cropping.

9765. Then as regards landlords' claims on the tenant for cross cropping and matters of that kind; do you think there would be any injustice to a landlord in barring his claim under heads of that kind, to the limit of one year; that is, would it be unjust to him not to allow him to go back further than a year in making claims for cross cropping, which, of course, has been done in the open light of day within the knowledge of his agent, if he has an agent?—I do not think the custom of our county would grant damage for cross cropping; the agreement might.

Restrictions on cultivation.

9766. Would you see any objection to forbidding an agreement which could pile up penalties for a long series of years for cross cropping while the tenant in the payment of his rent from time to time has not been rebuked for it or brought to book for it?—I hold that any restrictions by agreement on cultivation are bad, except, of course, the breaking up of the old turf land, which, I believe, in common law is a dilapidation; that is to say, I think no one is so good a judge of how land is to be cultivated as the man in occupation of the land.

ross-cropping.

9767. Then, I think, probably you would not think it an unwise provision of the law that a landlord should not be allowed to go back and impose penalties for cross cropping after a year had expired: that he should not have more than a year back?—I am not aware of, the arrangements in my neighbourhood covering that point.

9768. I went out of a farm as an executor this year where cross cropping had been done?—In my county?

9769. No, in my county. Verbal permission had been given to the tenant to cross crop in a certain way by the late owner, and he had been pursuing that with the knowledge of the agent; but that owner was dead, the estate had passed into another hand, and when we came to the valuation they said in law they could make a claim against us of something like 2,000*l*. I think.

9770. Under agreement?—Yes, under one of the clauses of the agreement. They did not press the strict letter of it, but they did use the power they had to exact some payment from us.

9770*a*. Would there be anything wrong in the law limiting that, going back to a year only?—I consider those agreements very foolish.

Reductions in rent.

9771. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I was rather surprised to hear of your confidence that the rents had not been reduced in Staffordshire to an average of, I understand, more than 10 per cent.?—I am of that opinion. (*See* Appendix A., XXVII.)

9772. Have you made careful inquiries throughout the whole of the county on that point?—I have written to three or four typical landowners whose names I am not free to mention, but who are known to me, and to whom my name would be known, asking them for an expression of opinion.

9773–4. Do you think that the extremes vary between 20 per cent. reduction in some cases and nothing at all in others, but that on the whole 10 per cent. is all the reduction that has been made on the average?—I think so.

9775. Are you well acquainted with South Staffordshire?—No, I am not. I am pretty well acquainted with some of the men who live there, both owners and tenants.

9776. I live very near to South Staffordshire, and I think certainly I could give you cases of estates, both large and small, where the reduction has been larger than that, and I wanted to know whether you have made any particular inquiry into that district?—Permanent reductions?

9777. Yes, permanent?—Would they be, may I ask the question, more than 20 per cent.?

9778. In some cases certainly, but I only wish to lay stress upon the point in order to assure myself that you have made careful inquiries to the best of your ability?—I have to the extent you see of applying to the Board of Inland Revenue.

ystem of arming.

9779. The North Staffordshire farming is more like Cheshire farming, is it not?—Agriculture in Staffordshire varies very greatly. Is is an extensive county; the land is of different qualities, and the proportion of arable to tillage varies very greatly. You are alluding to the south, no doubt.

9780. I was saying in the north the system of farming is more like that pursued in Cheshire?—Yes, and in Derbyshire.

9781. Where rents have fallen comparatively little?—And in Derbyshire. I had an expression of opinion from a man in Derbyshire that in his judgment the fall of rents in Derbyshire is not more than 10 per cent.

he law of istress.

9782. You say that you believe that if the law of distress was abolished it would clear away a large number of farmers who are now farming with inadequate capital?—Do you mean that it would dispossess them of their farms?

9783. It would have the tendency of largely reducing the number, at all events, in the future?—It would reduce the number of applicants with insufficient capital; but I think it would absolutely follow that a reduction in rent would be the effect of doing away with the law of distress, I put it in my own mind at 10 per cent.

9784. Do you think that a large amount of the land of England is cultivated with inadequate capital at the present moment?—Yes.

9785. Do you think that the abolition of the law of distress would bring in men with capital to take the place of those who would go out?—I have a strong opinion that it would.

9786. In Staffordshire you say that you have got men with capital to take the land under the existing law of distess?—Yes, we have.

9787. Then it has not prevented men of capital coming in in Staffordshire?—No. In these cases I have given you, especially in small holdings, you have men brought in to bid for farms who give more than the men of capital will give, and in the end it is the ruin of the men who have bid too much, and the consequent deterioration of the land, as shown in this statement coming from the Official Receiver's office.

9788. Will you explain why it is that the abolition of the law of distress will have such an important effect in bringing in men of capital?—It would reduce the competition for the farms inasmuch as it would take out of the competition the men who could not satisfy the owner of the land that they had sufficient capital.

9789. But you think there would be sufficient capital to provide for the cultivation of the land?—Clearly.

9790. Would that not mean the importation of a vast amount of capital in the place of the insufficient capital by which the land is now farmed?—I do not think so. I think there are men in England both capable and with capital ready to take land at its full value.

9791. If the rents were reduced?—Yes, and I only ask for 10 per cent.

9792. By the diminution of competition?—The rents would be reduced by the diminution of competition, and I think they would be reduced 10 per cent.

9793. (*Mr. Clay.*) You think that the law of distress creates a false competition?—I do.

9794. So that in that competition the tenant is very apt through the cash credit to take more land than he can manage?—Yes.

9795. Therefore the landlord suffers?—Everyone suffers. Might I add the expression of opinion from the Official Receiver:—"The operation of the law of "distress in my experience inflicts a very great hard- "ship upon the creditors of the farmer other than the "landlord."

9796. Then there is another very important element in this law of distress; the landlord only risks his rent, which is the interest on his capital, but the trader who really supplies *bonâ fide* articles—the carrying on of the farm by selling limes, cakes, and manures—risks his capital?—He does.

9797. Do you consider that fair?—No.

9798. If the trader has to risk that capital through the law of distress, does he not charge more for the article he sells, knowing that the landlord has a preferential claim?—I went to an implement manufacturer the other day and asked him why he kept his list prices so high. He said, I will take 25 per cent. off for you, and you need not pay me either. Why do you keep them so high? Because we have to deal with men who buy implements from us and cannot pay cash for them, and we know our risk if we give credit, and so we keep our list prices so high in order to average it.

9799. I think in your evidence to-day you have given us an example of a small tenant being sold up and the landlord through his distress getting nearly the whole of the proceeds. If I recollect aright the creditor risking his capital only got 1*d*. in the £?—I have mentioned three cases here where the landlord got practically the whole. In the one case the dividend to the public was 1*d*., in the other it was 2*s*. 9¾*d*., and in the other it is not yet settled.

9800. So in your mind both landlord and tenant, and the country at large would be a great deal the better off if this law of distress was totally abolished?—The land would be better farmed, the rent would be lower, the public would have greater produce, and the landlord would really receive his rents more regularly, though of rather less amount.

9801. And through the abolition of that law he would have a sounder competition, and there would be men with more capital entering into the business?—He would have better men farming his land.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

9802. Just a question regarding the Agricultural Holdings Act. You know the procedure of the Act has been expensive?—This Act is quite hopeless.

Official valuers.

9803. But you have no objections to having expert men, official referees, appointed in each locality to perform the duty of giving decisions between landlord and tenant?—I would say this: If, as it is news to me, you have in Scotland official arbitrators who singly do the valuations, and if your experience is satisfactory, I see no objection why that system should not be extended to England.

Custom in Scotland as to referee.

9804. I may say to you that in Scotland we have not exactly the official man appointed yet, but when the arbitrators differ—and they very often differ—we apply to the sheriff, and the sheriff, being a public official in each county of Scotland, knows the most expert men in agricultural business, and he appoints that referee or umpire, as you call him. Would that satisfy you in England?—That really was my suggestion; but I thought that the landlord and tenant did not appoint the arbitrators to start with; but, as I understand you now, they do, and the official referee is appointed by the sheriff.

9805. If the arbiters cannot agree upon an oversman, we call him—he is called a referee here—we apply to the court, that is to the sheriff, and he appoints a man of standing reputation as the sole arbiter; the landlord and the tenant may bring their arbiters if they like, but only as witnesses; if we have that process what use have we for arbiters if we have a special referee like an ordinary judge sitting upon the Bench giving his decisions upon these points?—You are asking me whether, in my judgment, I would approve of an official arbitrator being appointed to consider the case *ab initio*?

9806. And the whole case?—From the beginning?

9807. Yes?—Without the interposition of arbitrators?

9808. There will be no occasion for arbitrators?—Quite so.

9809. Would they not come in the place of witnesses giving evidence respectively for the tenant and for the landlord?—I can see one great advantage in that scheme, because I must honestly confess I have seen a great deal of mischief arise from the fact of a landlord or a tenant making an extreme claim, and the other side immediately making an extreme claim in the other way, and so the consequence has been that the action of the umpire has been made very much more difficult, inasmuch as he has to strike a balance between two people who, both of them, are in fault *ab initio*.

9810. Another point in our Act: the tenant has to give four months' notice before the end of his tenancy to make his claim. How long has the landlord to make his claim before the end of the tenancy?—He has two months, and I think a fortnight in England to consider it over before he makes his counterclaim, I think he has.

9811. The tenant in England has to give two months' notice before leaving the tenancy, and the landlord has a fortnight after the tenancy has expired. Would it not be justice for both parties to make the claim on the same day and at the same time?—I have illustrated that to my mind by a game of cribbage. I hold that the game of cribbage in respect of this valuation is just as if the one party saw the cards of his opponent before they were played, and the other party was in ignorance of the cards to be played. It follows that the person who sees his opponent's cards before playing his own is sure of winning the game.

9812. Whereas in equal justice to all parties would it not be well to have the two parties, landlord and tenant, making a claim on the same day?—It is flagrantly unjust now.

9813. It is your opinion that the claims should be made on the same day?—Certainly.

Competition for farms.

9814. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You say that the absence of competition would bring in men with capital, but are you aware that over a great part of England there is no competition for farms at the present moment?—I may say that I am only speaking of my own neighbourhood.

9815. And that the men of capital have not come in?—I am afraid that the condition of arable farming in England is almost hopeless—I must say so, but then I am speaking of a district where arable farming is not the important part of the business. I consider it is hopeless for the arable farmer.

The law of distress.

9816. You base your theories on the law of distress merely from what you know in your own district?—Yes.

Reduction of rent.

9817. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) You referred to an agent of a large estate who boasted that he never reduced the rental; does that agent manage to get tenants for the farms?—He may have about a couple of farms in hand.

9818. You do not, perhaps, know the particulars of it, but speaking of a large estate as I understood you to do, he must either get tenants for those farms at the current rates, or take a good many of the farms into his hands?—You must bear in mind that on this large estate which I have in my mind rents were not advanced during the seventies, and that we are not dealing by way of comparison with the high times in the seventies, but that we are dealing with the time antecedent.

9819. That is what I was going to ask you. Are the farms on this estate kept at an exceptionally low rent as rents at present are?—I am still of opinion that there the rents are about 10 per cent. too dear.

9820. Too dear?—Yes, that is my opinion.

9821. But you cannot say whether he really finds tenants for the bulk of the farms at those rents?—We never can tell in the case of new tenancies, and I can only tell by conversation with the old tenants.

9822. But you believe that this man in boasting in this way is speaking the truth, and that he has not given reductions?—I would not pledge myself to the truth of his phraseology.

Compensation for improvements.

9823. (*Mr. Little.*) There is only one point that I would ask a question upon, and I do not think it has been touched upon. Can you not conceive circumstances under which what might be an improvement to a holding would not be an improvement, but which might be an incumbrance to an estate?—No, I do not think I can. Would you explain?

9824. I will put a case which is not purely hypothetical. A man has an off lying portion of a farm, arable land, on which he wishes to have buildings; those buildings will save him a long cartage of the produce and taking back manure; and buildings on that detached portion of the holding would improve its value, that you would argue?—It might be so.

9825–6. It is probable that it would; it might be held to improve the value of the holding?—If it was shedding for the shelter of stock?

9827. For the shelter of stock and for making manure?—I should say it would not be an improvement if it was a threshing barn.

9828. Put the case that a claim might be made for an improvement to the holding and probably sustained; most reasonable men would say that it was an improvement to the holding, but it might be no improvement to the estate?—How so?

9829. Suppose that the landlord has determined to divide this off-lying portion of land between two adjoining farms which have abundant buildings?—And make another farm?

9830. No. Suppose that he has determined to throw a portion of it to one farm and a portion of it to another, and buildings are already provided, he would have to pay for the increased value to this particular holding, but his estate would not be benefited?—I must answer a hypothetical case as well as I can by saying that probably the fact that these buildings were put up would prevent the landlord from deciding that the farm should be divided.

9831. I said it was not a purely hypothetical case?—I misunderstood you; I beg your pardon.

9832. That is an instance of a possible injury to a landlord by his having to compensate for what is an improvement to a holding but is not an improvement to an estate?—I should think such a case as that is very exceptional.

9833. You would include the building of cottages, I suppose, as adding to the value of a holding?—Yes.

Mr. T. C. Smith.

1 Mar. 1894.

Mr. T. C. Smith.

1 Mar. 1894.

9834. But one can easily conceive circumstances under which a cottage on a particular holding might be no improvement to an estate but rather a nuisance?—Do you suggest that a tenant would build a cottage on the chance of recovering for it at the end of his tenancy?

9835. I suggest it as a possible thing.—It is possible.

9836. I am putting that as a case where the landlord might be called upon to compensate for what added to the letting value of the holding, but which might be an incumbrance and a nuisance to the estate?—I can scarcely see how it can add to the value of the holding and yet depreciate from the value of the estate.

9837. You see my point?—It might be a nuisance to the adjoining farm.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. W. Smith, M.P.

Mr. W. Smith, M.P.

Mr. William Smith, M.P., recalled and further examined.

(For previous evidence, *see* Question 9338.)

Farmers' Association in Lancashire.

9838. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You told us of an association of tenant farmers in Lancashire, and that the movement which resulted in the creation of that association began in 1892, can you tell us whether that was shortly after the great agricultural conference which was held in St. James' Hall in that year?—Yes, it was very shortly afterwards I think.

9839. What was the name of the association then?—There were several independent associations existing, but there was no federation of those associations; the Chester Farmers' Club, for instance, which was one of the prime movers, existed prior to that date.

9840. Will you, please, answer my question, what was the association that was formed immediately after the conference—what was the name of it then when it was first formed?—The Federation of Tenant Farmers' Associations, the same as it is now.

9841. Who was the first president of it?—Myself.

9842. Was one of the speakers at that conference a Mr. Rimmer, a member of it?—Probably so, I could not be quite certain, but I think it is very probable. He is chairman of the Preston Farmers Club, or Farmers' Association, now styled the Lancashire Tenant Farmers' Association.

9843. Your association that you speak of, the original association, was never termed the Lancashire Tenant Farmers' Association?—No.

9844. There is another association, I understand, now in Lancashire called the Lancashire Federation of Farmers' Associations, of which Mr. Kay and Mr. Barlow are two leading members?—Yes, that is so.

9845. If I am rightly informed they were all included in the original association you speak of?—Not the one with which I have had connection. There was an association existing in Preston prior to the formation of this federation, and this association of which you now speak, Mr. Kay's Association, was in relationship—I do not know the exact relationship—with the Preston Association.

9846. When did you form your association?—I think it was very early in 1893. I know it was not formed in December 1892, when the Conference was held in St. James' Hall.

9847. Very early in 1893?—Yes, in 1893.

9848. Did these gentlemen that I speak of, Mr. Barlow, Mr. Kay, and the members of their association at any time belong to that?—No.

9849. Never?—Never.

9850. It is not the case that there was separation at one time between the Tenant Farmers' Association and the Association now presided over by Mr. Kay?—The association was a local one at Preston; they gave themselves an ambitious name, though the association remained practically the same.

9851. What was the ambitious name?—They called themselves the Lancashire Tenant Farmers' Association, instead of calling themselves the Preston and District Tenant Farmers' Association.

9852. You never belonged to that association?—No.

9853. Who did belong to it?—I think the Preston Farmers' Club was really the kernel of it, and a few branches in East Lancashire.

9854. Was Mr. Rimmer the Chairman of it?—Mr. Rimmer, I think, was the prime mover of it.

9855. Was he the chairman of it?—I almost think he was, but I would not be quite sure. Mr. Gillespie was the secretary of the same association of which Mr. Rimmer was chairman, and Mr. Gillespie afterwards became the secretary of Mr. Kay's association, and remained so till a few months ago. This is not a Lancashire association which I represent, it is a federation of tenant farmers' associations, without any curtailment of area.

9856. I am trying to get from you what was the case a little earlier, before you formed this new federation, as I understand there was an association before you formed yours?—Quite so, the Preston District Association, and Mr. Kay's was a split from the Preston Farmers' Club.

9857. So there was a split between the two different associations at that time?—Yes, a split on policy, I believe; the programme of one section went much farther than the other one was prepared to follow.

9858. Then you formed, I understand, a new association?—I did not form it. The Chester Farmers' Club were the prime movers and the Preston Farmers' Association. I attended their first meeting at Chester where it took shape, and at a later meeting—I think it was at Warrington, but I am not quite certain—they invited me to be their president, which I accepted.

9859. Were you a member of that association which you speak of as the Preston Association?—I do not think so. I gave them a subscription to promote their objects, but I was never a member I believe. I might be an honorary member. I do not know what they did themselves, but I was never an active member of it.

9860. Surely you can tell us whether you were a member of that association or not?—I do not think I was, but in view of the subscription I gave them they might place me on their honorary list, I do not know. I never was at any of their meetings, nor took any part in them.

9861. You gave them a subscription?—Yes, and there was a quarrel between the two about the time the split took place as to which association should have it, and how to divide it. I think I gave them 50*l.*

9862. Can you say why those associations separated?—I believe it was a question of policy as far as I know.

9863. On a question of policy?—Yes, the Preston district, Mr. Rimmer, and Mr. Hardisty, and Mr. Gornell, I think the secretary was, were in favour of the three "F's" and the others were in favour of a much milder form of reform.

9864. Then practically the split between these two associations occurred on the question of the three "F's"?—Yes, I think so.

9865. What was the number of members of the Preston association at that time?—I could not tell you.

9866. I observe that in his report, Mr. Wilson-Fox puts it at 300. Your are not able to give us any information about that?—I should think that is probable, but I believe they have formed some new branches since then.

9867. He calls it the Lancashire Tenant Farmers' Association, "consisting of 300 members," for anything you know that is correct?—I should say it was probable at that time.

9868. Do you know anything as to the number of the members of the Lancashire Federation, of which Mr. Kay is president?—I do not.

9869. I observe that Mr. Wilson-Fox puts that at 700 members, but you know nothing about it?—I should not be prepared to contradict it, or to confirm it; either one or the other. I know Mr. Kay very well personally, but I know nothing about the association.

9870. After the split between these two bodies I understand that you formed the new association?—Personally, I formed nothing; I was simply one of a number who took part in the movement. The prime movers were the Chester Farmers' Club and the Preston Association, then called the Preston Farmers' Club.

9871. That resulted in the formation of a new association?—Yes.

9872. Of which you are at present the president?—Yes, I was elected the president.

9873. That is entirely separate from the other association presided over by Mr. Kay?—Yes, that is so.

9874. Those two associations differed altogether upon the question of policy I understand?—I may say that I met Mr. Kay and Mr. Gillespie a few months ago with a view to re-union, or union you may call it. They promised to send me the drafts of a Bill which they were preparing and I promised to send them drafts of my Bill, which I did, but they have never sent me yet the drafts of their Bill, so no further step has been taken.

9875. You are not able to give us any information I suppose as to the expansion of Mr. Kay's association?—No, I could not.

9876. Now, with regard to your own you have met the Sub-Commissioner I think, on either one occasion or or more in Lancashire?—Our association, our federation has never met him, but some of the local branches have met him; the Preston Farmers' Club met him, and he attended a meeting of the Lancaster District Association.

9877. The Preston Farmers' Association being the original one?—It was the first of all, I believe, to be in the field.

9878. Were you present at either of those meetings?—I was present at the one in Lancaster, in fact, I was present at three meetings that Mr. Wilson-Fox held in Lancaster.

9879. The meeting you were present at was which, the Preston or the Lancaster meeting?—The Lancaster meetings, I was never at any other.

9880. Was that numerously attended by farmers?—Yes.

9881. How many were present do you suppose?—There were three meetings held; the first one was called by the Agricultural Society, and consisted of farmers and landowners, as many of the one as of the other, probably the second was one of our Lancaster District Farmers' Associations pure and simple, and then some landowners, or the agents of landowners raised the question at that second meeting whether as the Tenant Farmers' Association had been given a meeting to itself it was not fair that the landowners should also have a meeting of their own. Mr. Wilson-Fox good naturedly consented, and a third meeting was held, which was supposed to be a purely landowners' meeting.

9882. Do I understand that there was one which was purely a tenant farmer's meeting?—Yes, the Agricultural Societies called it.

9883. Where was that at?—At the Town Hall.

9884. Where?—Lancaster.

9885. How many tenant farmers attended it?—I do not know that I could give that to you; it would be a rough estimate. There was a large company present, and it was a mixed company. I daresay besides landowners and tenant farmers, there were a number of trades people in the town, and that sort of thing.

9886. As far as the tenant farmers were concerned, can you give us any idea of the numbers that attended it?—I could make a guess, but it would not be much more than a guess; there might be 80 or 100.

The Federation of Tenant Farmers' Association.

9887. When the existing association, I think you call it the Federation of the Lancashire Farmers' Association, was formed what did it include?—There were a number of societies in Cheshire; the Chester Farmers' Club, and the Wirrall Farmers' Club; some in Flintshire also at that time, and Denbighshire.

9888. There was the Chester Farmers' Club?—The Chester Farmers' Club was one of the principal bodies.

9889. What else, if you please?—There was the Preston Farmers' Club, the Lancaster and District Farmers' Club, the North Lonsdale (that is, the North Lancashire Farmers' Club), and I think one at Burnley. There are a good many altogether, but I do not remember their names.

9890. Was there one at Warrington?—I think there was one at Warrington too.

9891. Was there one at Wigan?—Yes, there was one at Wigan also.

9892. One at Bolton?—I do not think the Bolton one is federated to either one or the other groups; I think it is independent.

9893. Is that so?—Yes, I believe so. There is the Bolton Dairy Farmers' Association, I know; I have been invited to go over to them, but I have never been, and I think they are not attached to any body at the moment.

9894. What is there beyond those?—I could not give you them from memory, but I told you the other day there are about thirty altogether; there are some in Cumberland.

9895. Can not you tell us what the different bodies are, belonging to this Association?—No; but I should be very glad to get you from the Secretary, an exact list, if it is important, and if you wish it.

9896. I want to know, because I am anxious to ascertain from where it is that you make up the number of 5,000 or 6,000 members that you talk of?—There are a number of associations in Cumberland.

9897. The great bulk of the members of the association are out of Lancashire?—Lancashire and Cheshire—I think there are more in Cheshire, perhaps than in Lancashire even.

9898. What are the number of members in the Chester Farmers' Club?—I could not tell you from memory; I have not those details.

9899. Can you tell us how many belong to the Wigan Association?—I do not think I can tell you the number of any individual association. I had no idea that I should be asked such a question. Should I get you the list from the Secretary?

9900. I should rather like to ask you this question now, the Lancaster Association is the foundation of it, I understand?—No, you are quite wrong. The Preston, I say, was the first mover, and the Chester Farmers' Club was the next in importance in the movement.

9901. Can you give us any idea of how many members belong to the Preston branch?—I could not.

9902. Are there 100?—Yes; you stated a few moments ago 300, and I said I thought that would probably be correct.

9903. In the Preston Branch?—Yes, you stated so. They style themselves the Lancashire Tenant Farmers' Association, which is very confusing. They made a very great mistake when they assumed that name.

9904. With regard to the Lancaster Branch, are there 100 members belonging to that?—Yes, more.

9905. What do you put it at?—I should say between 200 and 300.

9906. Bolton, you say, is not included?—I do not think it is; I could not be positive, but I do not think they are allied to any group; I think they stand independent.

9907. Burnley; can you tell us how many members it has?—I do not know the numbers.

9908. Have you any idea at all?—I have none whatever; not of Burnley.

9909. Can you say whether there are 100 members belonging to that?—I have never been to a meeting of that at all.

9910. Have you any idea that there are 100 members belonging to that?—From conversation with the president and the moving spirits I should say more. They speak of it as an important association.

9911. Would it be twice that?—It is all guess-work on my part; I have never been to any of their meetings.

9912. I am asking these questions because I am genuinely anxious to know how far your association can be held to represent the feelings of the farmers in Lancaster. I find from the Census of 1891 there are 13,255 farmers in Lancashire, and I should very much like to know what proportion of those farmers belong to your association, it must be something very small from what you have told us?—I should say that I should think that in Cheshire, and Flintshire, and Denbighshire, bordering there, they are probably more than the total of the Lancashire members.

9913. Quite so. In Lancashire, apparently from the answers I have elicited from you, there can barely be a thousand?—I have not enumerated all the associations I think; they do not well come to memory; there are other associations than those you have got a list of.

9914. In fact, all the information that you can give to us about the number of members in Lancashire belonging to your association, is very vague?—Yes, that is so. Had I thought I should be asked those detailed questions, I would have had the exact particulars for you. I shall be very glad to supply them to you.* But I do not see what bearing it has on the point.

9915. The Chester Farmers' Club was one of the first to join your federation, I understand?—Yes.

9916. Is your association a political association?—No.

9917. In no sense?—Not in any degree at all.

9918. I understand that Mr. G. Cooke of Tattonhall, and Mr. Thomas Parker, are two very active members of your association?—Yes, they are members of the Chester Farmers' Club and members of our association also.

9919. They are gentlemen, I understand, whom we are likely to have before us here?—Yes, one of them is in the other room now and the other was here last Friday and he is coming again.

9920. Do these gentlemen belong to the same political party as yourself?—Mr. Cooke does.

9921. Is it then a fact that these two gentlemen with yourself attended recently the Horncastle election?—Yes; there were two others, Mr. Amos of Kent and Mr. Worthington of Wigan.

9922. Am I rightly informed that your attending that election, as representing your association, was subsequently made the subject of very grave complaint by some of the members of the Chester Farmers' Club?—There was one gentleman moved some resolution to that effect, but I believe he was not even seconded, and it was withdrawn.

9923. The resolution that was moved, I think, was to this effect, was it not:—"That this club withdraw from "The Federation of Tenant Farmers' Clubs?"—It was something to that effect but it was all done under a mis-apprehension—the man was entirely wrong.

9924. What were the reasons alleged in support of that motion?—I suppose they had thought we had gone to Horncastle in the interests of some political candidate, which was certainly not the case.

9925. (*Chairman.*) Did you go to Horncastle with the gentlemen you mention as a deputation from the association?—No, we went as members of the association, but not by direct mandate from the association. We were all members of the executive.

9926. But you went for the special purpose of advocating the views of your association?—Yes.

9927. And of persuading the electors to adopt those views?—Yes.

9928. But, as I understand you, without any intention to urge them to vote for one candidate or the other?—That is so. I spoke at two meetings there. I was questioned at both meetings as to what views the candidates took on this question. I declined to reply, because I said, "We have only up to this time seen one candidate," and I said "I prefer to give no answer "until we have seen both and can give answers as to "both."

9929. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Is it not the case that at a meeting of the Chester Farmers' Club it was reported "that "three members of the Federation, Mr. W. Smith, "M.P., Mr. Thomas Parker, and Mr. George Cook, "Tattonhall, went to the Horncastle election as "representing the federation of so called Tenant "Farmers' Clubs. Those gentlemen had no official "authority to act in that way so far as he was aware. "They ought to keep politics out of the club and they "ought not to use the federation as a lever for their "own party ends." Upon that statement this resolution was moved:—"That this club withdraws from "the federation." Then the whole question was discussed and it ended in this way, that the motion was withdrawn for a period of 12 months. Now is that correct or is it not?—Yes, that is so. This pamplet of which you have all had copies and which was circulated in the Horncastle division says in the last paragraph in the largest type of all. "If English farmers "will consider their own interests as well as the interests of agriculture generally they will support Mr. "Smith's Bill and vote only for the candidates who "will support it."

9930. Does the Chester Farmers' Club then still belong to the federation?—Yes.

9931. For the next 12 months?—Yes.

9932. Referring again to the split which originally occurred, do you think it is possible that, like these members of the Chester Farmers' Club, the seceding members may have thought that the attention of your association was directed to political objects rather than to the advantage of agriculture generally?—I cannot say. I understood always that it was on the question of policy—as to the extent of reform that they should seek.

Depression in Lancashire.

9933. Now you told us in the course of your examination, that the depression in your district only became acute during the last two years?—Three years.

9934. Three years?—I think it is three years.

Low prices.

9935. And the first cause you attribute it to was the drop in prices?—Yes.

9936. In beef, mutton, and in dairy produce?—Yes.

Dairy farming.

9937. Dairy produce is the prominent element, I supose, in the agriculture of your district?—Cheese and butter both.

9938. Is there a large production of milk for sale?—Not very large, except around such towns as Preston, Blackpool, Lancaster, &c.; around all the towns there would be a good deal of milk, what we call, kitted into the town.

9939. What proportion of the dairy industry do you suppose it represents?—There is very little arable land, at least but a small proportion of arable land, but grazing and dairying are practically——.

9940. I did not make myself quite clear; I ought to have asked you what proportion of the dairy industry does the produce of milk represent, apart from cheese and butter?—If I speak of Lancashire generally it becomes different. I think down in South Lancashire there is a good deal of milk sent into Manchester and Liverpool. I was speaking rather of my own immediate district, north of Preston, where I live, and there it is a very small per-centage.

9941. In the neighbourhood of Liverpool?—Yes, and also in Cheshire.

9942. There the sale of milk is very large?—I see by travelling on the railway large numbers of milk cans going by rail.

9943. I think you also said that increased facilities for communication were the very prominent cause of this recent depression?—Yes, in the greater ease with which foreign products can be brought, and the very reduced charges for their conveyance.

9944. That would not apply, at all events, in the case of milk?—No.

9945. Are the localities in Lancashire well supplied with milk, or is there a further opening for dairy-farming in that district?—No, I think they are well supplied; I have not heard any complaints.

Low prices.

9946. As regards the chief cause then of the depression, the drop in prices, have you any remedy to suggest?—No, they will have to follow their natural course.

Tenure.

9947. It was also due, you said, to the present system of tenure?—Yes, I believe that if the farmers had had a better system of tenure they would have been able to to farm successfully, even with the prevailing low prices.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

9948. The Agricultural Holdings Act, 1887, I understand you to say, to a large extent, has been a failure, but are you aware that many witnesses have stated to us that it has, at all events, done something to improve tenure in this country?—I could not subscribe to that.

Claims and counter-claims.

9949. Not at all?—I think the benefit from it is very slight indeed. I will give you a case in point if you like, which has occurred within the last few days. I will not go into detail of it because the gentleman will probably come before you. A claim is made for 290*l.* The landlord immediately counterclaims for 1,490*l.* of which 280*l.* are rent and tithe which is not disputed. An arbitration is held, and not one penny piece of the landlord's claim is allowed except the rent and the tithe, whereas I think 190*l.* out of the 290*l.* of the tenant's

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* The witness subsequently furnished the following particulars of the number of the members of the Federation of Tenant Farmers' Clubs:—Wigan and District Club, 120; Warrington, 300; Birkenhead, 240; Abram and District, 80; Wrexham, 60; Lancaster, 140; Sandback, 60; North Lonsdale, 200; Preston (styled Lancashire Tenants), 450; Burnley and District, 160; Bolton and District Dairy Farmers, 200; Stockport Farmers, 100; Chester Farmers' Club, 500; Cumberland group (six societies), 600; South Kent Farmers, 100; Total, 3,310.

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claim is allowed. That tenant's claim would have been very much greater had it not been for a lease very prejudicial which he was in a manner compelled to sign, and which shut out the great bulk of the improvements which he had made prior to the date of the lease. The experience generally has been that the benefit to be derived from the Act was so small that it was not worth contesting.

9950. (*Chairman.*) I cannot quite see then, where the hardship is, because he got all that he claimed apparently? —The hardship is this: experience has shown in the past that the moment a tenant makes a claim which may be perfectly justified, he is met by a counterclaim much larger in extent.

9951. Here the landlord made a counterclaim for 1,490*l.*, and it was rejected?—It is a sort of sword hung over the heads of the tenants.

9952. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) In this case that you quote to me, as showing that the Act was an absolute failure the tenant got his full claim I understand?—No he did not. He got 190*l.* out of the 290*l.* that he claimed.

9953. He would have got nothing I suppose before the passing of the Act?—I do not know. It would depend on the terms of his lease, I suppose. One of the largest estate agents in the district before Mr. Wilson-Fox at Preston (Mr. Fair) who is agent for the Lytham estates, and for the Earl of Bective in the neighbourhood, stated at that inquiry, that the Agricultural Holdings Act was a dead letter.

9954. I think I understand you at all events to admit this, that although it may not have done any very great good, the position of the tenant is certainly not worse, and perhaps is slightly better, than it was before the passing of the Act?—Yes, it cannot be worse.

Tenure.

9955. In fact the system of tenure now, is less bad than it was 20 years ago?—I should say it was a slight improvement, but exceedingly slight; it is not such as to encourage farmers to throw themselves with energy into the cultivation of the land, or to increase the products.

9956. Is it not the fact that 20 years ago, agriculture was in the most flourishing condition possible, and that it had reached the very summit of prosperity?—The farmers were getting better prices for their products then, and I suppose even in spite of an unjust system of tenure, they could make a profit.

9957. Then if a worse system of tenure was accompanied by the greatest possible prosperity, it is rather difficult I think, is it not, to reconcile the statement, that a bad system of tenure is the cause of the present depression?—If you had had an equal comparison, if you had had the same system of tenure under the same conditions, or rather varying systems of tenure under the same conditions as to price &c., you might have made a comparison, but you cannot under the circumstances I think.

Complaints.

9958. The main complaint I understand of your association is this: first of all, insecurity of tenure; secondly, that there is insufficient compensation for improvements; and thirdly, that the rents are too high?—We put the rents first.

9959. You put the rents first?—Yes; and the security of tenure second.

Evicted tenants.

9960. Will you let me ask you a question with regard to the security of tenure? At Question 9519 in the evidence you were good enough to give the other day you say that the tenants' capital is equally insecure everywhere. You are asked, "Do you think that the "farmers' capital is more insecure in Lancashire than "in other parts of the country," and you say, "No, it "is equally insecure everywhere." Then you are asked the question, "We hear very little of this from witnesses representing those parts of the country," and you say, "It was a matter of notoriety at the "time." You supported this statement by giving us two instances of gentlemen who had been evicted, I understood you to say, for reasons quite apart from the conduct and management of their farms?—Yes.

9961. You said, I think, that one was evicted for political reasons, and that the other was evicted for what cause was it?—For taking part in the formation of this federation, and in the movement generally.

9962. Further you told us in answer to a question of one of the Commissioners, "I have no doubt myself, "though I am not able to give you names and dates "now, that in many cases something of the same kind "has happened?"—Yes, I can give you a short instance now which is on religious grounds—a very prominent case—one political, one for agitating the farmers' own questions, and the third for not being ready to go to the parish church but going to the Wesleyan Chapel instead.

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Compensation for improvements.

9963. Reverting to the question of the insecurity of tenure, even supposing that a tenant is dispossessed of his farm for any reason, are you not aware of many districts in the country where either by custom or agreement he receives the fullest compensation for all his improvements?—I am not aware of any district where he receives full compensation.

Lincolnshire custom.

9964. Are you acquainted with the Lincolnshire custom?—No, only very casually. I believe the Lincolnshire people are better off than in most counties.

9965. You are not acquainted with the custom?—Except what I heard during the Horncastle election.

9966. You are not prepared to say he would not receive full compensation under that custom?—I am not prepared to pronounce a decision on the Lincolnshire custom.

Custom of other counties.

9967. Are you acquainted with the customs in other parts of the country?—There are no customs in Lancashire or Westmorland or Cumberland or Cheshire which give a man full compensation.

9968. With regard to a great many other counties there may be that custom although you are not acquainted with it?—Take Mr. Clare Sewell Reade's statement at the Agricultural Conference in 1892. He stated distinctly that in the county of Norfolk there was a decided premium offered to a man to leave his farm in a dirty state.

9969. That was in the county of Norfolk?—Yes; I think if that had not been the fact that statement would have been traversed long ago.

9970. I did not say the county of Norfolk; I asked were there not many other districts with which you are not acquainted where you are not prepared to say that they do not receive full compensation?—I am not aware of any district where full compensation is given.

9971. That is not my question. Are you prepared to say that there are districts where that compensation is given?—I can only speak of what I know—I do not know of any where that compensation is given.

9972. You are not acquainted with the customs in the great majority of counties and districts where it is given?—I think we should have heard during this agitation if there had been any very special customs.

9973. Why—your agitation does not extend very far I understand?—I mean the general agitation. I have been in the counties of Sussex and Kent and Northamptonshire and other counties speaking on this question, and I have invited all the criticisms of our policy that I could get, but I have never heard anything of that kind, excepting in Lincolnshire.

9974. Have you never heard of the custom of the county of Nottingham?—No.

9975. Nor of parts of Yorkshire?—Not of any special custom.

9976. Nor of Cambridge?—Not of any special custom.

9977. Huntingdonshire?—Not of any special custom giving the tenant ample compensation.

9978. In fact you are not accquainted with these customs?—I am not acquainted with all the local customs.

Reductions of rent.

9979. The next complaint was high rents. Do I understand you to say that they are general in Lancashire?—Yes, I said that the permanent reductions in rent were very few; they were the exception.

9980. Whose fault is it? Why do the tenants give these high rents?—A man has been brought up to farming, and he cannot very well turn himself to any other occupation. Perhaps he expects that times will improve which may enable him to pay them.

9981. Surely there are vast districts in England at the present time where any number of farms can be obtained, where a great number are altogether unlet, and where the landlords are busily engaged seeking for tenants?—And a great number of Lancashire men have gone down into Essex and such counties during the last two or three years.

9982. Has that done nothing to reduce the rents?—It does not seem to have had any appreciable effect.

High rents.

9983. Is it not the case that many tenant farmers in Lancashire have maintained that it is the tenants who have now to blame themselves for the high rents, because they bid against each other?—There is something in that. I think they are partly to blame.

9984. Are you aware of the case that has been stated to us by our Sub-Commissioner, which occurred upon Lord Sefton's estate?—May I ask upon which estate of Lord Sefton; one is in the immediate proximity of Lancaster, and the other is near Liverpool.

Competition for farms.

9985. That I am afraid I cannot give you. The paragraph I refer to is this: "Colonel Wyatt, agent to "the Earl of Sefton, gives the following remarkable "evidence to show what keen competition there is to "get on that estate. 'I had seven candidates for a "'good farm last year. Two men offered to give the "'out-going tenant 500*l.* if he could get the farm for "'them.'" Surely that does not look as if the rents were so very high on that estate?—That may be an estate where the rents were not advanced during the better times, consequently it would not be in the same need of reduction now.

9986. At Hambleton there was a meeting, we are informed by the same Sub-Commissioner, and what he says of that meeting is this: the partners there said, "It is the tenants' fault that rents are high, and "not the landlords', because tenants will bid up against "the other"?—There may be something in that; there are men who bid a rent for a farm which they know or feel it is not worth. Then when they have got nicely on the farm, they perhaps expect to get a reduction made to them.

9987. Then I observe again that the gentleman who you told us was the Chairman of the Lancashire Association—I think Mr. Rimmer?—No, the Preston Association.

9988. He makes this statement at the Lancashire Tenant Farmers' Association; that he and the association agreed that "the farmers were themselves to "blame for raising the market price of the rent to "what they considered a fictitious value"?—They are to blame somewhat; there is no doubt that has part to do with it.

Reductions of rent.

9989. As a matter of fact some permanent reductions have been made already?—Not very many in the district I am acquainted with. I have made some inquiries since I was here last week. On the two largest estates in the district perhaps—the late Duke of Devonshire's, now Mr. Victor Cavendish's and the Duke of Buccleuch's—no permanent reduction has been made in either case, but a temporary remission of 10 per cent. has been given on several rent days.

9990. Considering that the depression has only become acute during the last two years perhaps permanent reductions might be considered to be premature?—It has been very acute where it has become acute.

9991. Do you think a landlord should be called upon to make permanent reductions in the case of depression which has only existed for two years?—Three years I said, with no signs of any immediate improvement. I think he would be a wise man if he did. I told you that in our case we made reductions of 33 per cent. on several farms.

9992. You gave us some very interesting information as to your own farms. I observe that a farm of 284 acres let for 800*l.* rental?—Yes.

9993. And that is now reduced to 600*l.*, with a further temporary abatement?—To 550*l.*, of which 50*l.* has to be spent. I did not give the whole of the cases, I just replied to the questions put to me. The average rental of my own land is something less than 30*s.* an acre.

Rent of certain farms.

9994. Something less?—Yes. I gave you the best farms; the highest rented farms in the instances I quoted.

9995. You gave us two farms?—Yes.

9996. Both of those appear to me to be let at a very desirable, not to say very heavy rent, even in these times?—They are worth it. These are farms my father had in his own hands for a great number of years, and spent enormous sums of money on.

9997. Is that kind of rent typical of the rent of the district?—There is land in the district even in these times of extreme depression that could be let for 3*l.* an acre. I have land on my hands now that I could let for over 3*l.* an acre if I chose to let it.

9998. (*Chairman.*) Even with the present depression?—Yes.

9999. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Have you ever had any difficulty on the subject of rent with any of your own tenants?—Difficulty about rent?

10,000. Yes?—No; I do not think we have.

10,001. Any troubles; any complaint about rents?—No. The only thing approaching anything of the kind was that one man who took a farm at a rental of 256*l.* did not want to give quite as much at the time, but took it, with an assurance from me personally that if, after a couple of years' experience, it was not worth quite so much we would reduce the rent. He did not wait even the expiration of one year: he wanted it reduced immediately and I did not accede to his request. He admitted to me in the course of conversation that he was saving money at the same time, but he thought he ought to save more—he wanted a reduction of 16*l.* from 256*l.* to 240*l.*, or from 236*l.* to 220*l.*—I could not be quite certain which—and he left the farm in consequence. When re-let it was let for 16*l.* less, and I at once returned him the 16*l.* a year for the two years he had occupied the farm.

10,002. Is that the case that was referred to in public at one of the meetings of the Sub-Commissioner in Lancashire?—I dare say it is. These are old election stories that were brought up in 1892 against me, and I had no difficulty in settling them.

"Land Tenure (England) Bill."

10,003. Your experience upon these matters has moved you to introduce a Bill dealing with the whole question?—My interest in agriculture and the welfare of the farmers—I would rather put it that way.

Land courts.

10,004. Your Bill practically extends what is known as the Irish Land Legislation to England?—It is on somewhat similar lines, I think.

10,005. Are you acquainted with the machinery of the Irish Land Bill?—Slightly.

10,006. Are you aware that under that Bill there has been at times a tremendous block in the courts which have to fix the fair rents, and the cases have been unable to be taken for months and months, and have had to wait for great periods for decisions?—I believe that is so.

10,007. If the Bill was largely used in England should we not be liable to the same difficulty here?—No, you would have a multiplicity of courts far in excess of what you have in Ireland, and the conditions are not the same.

10,008. The courts you propose for the decision of these questions is the county court?—Yes.

10,009. Is not the county court pretty well occupied with its own work already?—In some districts.

10,010. Have you not occasionally heard of cases where business is sometimes delayed already in the county courts?—The judges now take groups of courts. It might require some additional judges to be appointed.

10,011. Is it conceivable that without an enormous addition to the machinery it would be possible for the county court to decide all the cases between landlords and tenants in England if the Bill be passed, and tenants usually went into court?—I think, as I said the other day, that typical cases would be adopted which would form precedents and guides in others.

10,012. What reason have you to suppose that a landlord would agree to a great lowering of his rent without trying what redress he could get at the courts?—I take it that if he had an ordinary degree of common sense he would see what the court was doing, and he would be a foolish man to throw away money.

10,013. Why did it not have that effect in Ireland?—The conditions are different there.

10,014. In what respect?—You have to ascertain there what the improvements are that the tenant has made.

10.015. Where?—On the farms, they have erected buildings, etcetera.

10,016. You are speaking now of Ireland?—Yes.

10,017. Surely the fact that the landlord makes all the permanent improvements in England would add to the difficulties and the complications?—He does not

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make all the permanent improvements in England, he does as regards the buildings.

10,018. As a matter of fact the landlord makes the great majority of the permanent improvements?—What I think the court is needed for is that the farmers should know that there was in case of need an impartial authority to which they might appeal to redress their wrongs.

10,019. However, you think that the machinery you have provided is quite adequate and sufficient for the work?—Yes.

10,020. You see no difficulty of a block or of its interfering with other business of the county court?—I say some additional judges might need to be appointed, because I know they take groups of five or six courts in my own district.

10,021. (*Chairman.*) Do you think county court judges are competent to decide these difficult questions?—With the assistance of the practical men they would have as assessors.

10,022. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Then you are not in the least induced to reconsider your proposals by the knowledge of the enormous blocks of business that there have been already in the land courts in Ireland?—No.

Relation between landlords and tenants.

10,023. Are you aware that dual ownership in Ireland has been found in many respects to be so exceedingly objectionable that both parties in the State have now for some years in the past been trying to get rid of it by introducing Land Purchase Bills to make the tenants owners of the land?—Of course in Ireland there had been a great deal of friction between the two parties long before this Act was passed, and then there is the extreme state of tension. I should not object at all to land purchase being extended to England, but before you could have land purchase you must have some tribunal or means of arriving at a fair judicial rent to be the basis of the purchase.

10,024. As to the relations between landlords and tenants in Ireland are they such as you would wish to see reproduced in this country in your opinion?—Do you mean the present or the past relations?

10,025. Both?—I think it would be a very great misfortune if the relations which existed in Ireland prior to the Irish land legislation, existed in this country.

10,026. Are the relations between landlords and tenants in Ireland generally friendly, or are they of an antagonistic character?—I do not know what they are now, I have not been in Ireland for some years; I can only judge from the past.

10,027. In the past do you think they were antagonistic?—Yes.

10,028. For anything you know to the contrary they are much the same at present?—I should say they are less antagonistic now.

10,029. What do you hold them to be in England?—They are not strongly antagonistic.

10,030. You do not agree with a great number of witnesses who have given evidence before us to the effect that they are extremely friendly, as a rule?—In many cases they are very friendly, in others there is a sense of injustice which rankles.

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10,031. Have you no fears that if Irish legislation was extended all over England similar relations might arise between the landlords and the tenants in this country?—No, the relationship in Ireland is not the result of that legislation; it was what existed prior, and I think it has been ameliorated by that legislation.

10,032. Then you are of opinion that the relations between landlords and tenants in Ireland have improved since the year 1870, when Irish land legislation was first introduced?—Yes, I should say so. I know there is a fear in England of the same state of things occurring if no legislation does take place.

10,033. On what do you base that opinion—on what information?—I was told credibly the other day that on one very large estate in Leicestershire with a large number of tenants, an estate on which no reduction has been made, if a reduction was not made at the coming rent day there would be a plan of campaign organised, and absolutely no rent paid.

10,034. I think you did not understand my question. I was asking you on what information you based your opinion that the relations between landlords and tenants in Ireland to-day are more friendly, and are better than they were prior to 1870?—Simply from what I read in the newspapers.

10,035. You get your information from the newspapers?—Yes.

10,036. What—that the relations between landlords and tenants prior to 1870 were worse in Ireland than they have been for the last 10 or 15 years?—Yes.

10,037. I do not know what newspaper you get it from. Are you a practical farmer yourself?—Yes.

10,038. Have you much practical acquaintance with farming in England generally?—I have not farmed very much myself, but when my father was living he had five or six farms on hand at once frequently, and I assisted him—I kept the accounts of the farms.

10,039. Have you given much attention to the conditions of agriculture in other counties?—Not very much in other counties.

10,040. Nor to the customs or agreements under which they are carried on?—I have not a very intimate acquaintance with them.

10,041. You have no very intimate acquaintance with Ireland, or Irish agriculture either?—I have spent some time there but not just in recent years.

10,042. I understand your position to be this, that without having given, as you told us, any careful study or attention to the general condition of agriculture in England—to the agreements and customs under which it is carried on, or to the general conditions of agriculture in Ireland, you do not hesitate to come before the Commission and propose a sweeping revolution in the tenure of land which is to extend all over the country?—I am in this position, that I know there is very great dissatisfaction with the present state of affairs in this country; I know that when a very sweeping reform of land tenure was advocated in St. James' Hall it was carried unanimously; I know that in all the counties where I have spoken on the subject the proposals we make have been received very favourably; and in the absence of some better proposal I think the proposal I make is a desirable one. I can point to no better plan.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

Nineteenth Day.

Friday, 2nd March 1894.

PRESENT:

The RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.	JOHN CLAY, Esq.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.	CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.	ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.	JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.	GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.	WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.	WALTER HUME LONG, Esq., M.P.
	CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq. *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
FREEMAN THOMAS, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. WILLIAM SMITH, M.P., recalled and further examined.

Security of tenure.

10,043. (*Mr. Long.*) I propose to ask you one or two questions, first of all with regard to your evidence, and then to come, if you will allow me, to your Bill. I understand that the basis of your reasons for desiring to amend the condition of things agriculturally is the want of security on the part of the occupier, and the general depression?—Yes; and coupled with that what I believe to be a fact that the land is not developed nearly to its full extent, in consequence of the present system of tenure of land.

10,044. Yes, but that is the result, not the cause, is it not, of the want of security and general depression?—It might be taken as that.

10,045. I understood you to say in answer to one question, Question 9475, that "the want of security " and the very inadequate compensation now enjoyed " by farmers is having a very prohibitive effect both " on their energy and skill in management?"—Yes.

10,046. Do I understand you to mean by that, that in your opinion farmers have not been farming well?—Not so well in recent years, they have not been making the improvements that they formerly made.

10,047. Then would it be correct to say that you consider one of the causes of agricultural depression is bad farming?—Yes. I think, in fact I feel certain, that had the farmers been in a more secure position which would have justified them in a greater expenditure upon the land, the depression at all events would not have been nearly so acute.

10,048. Greater expenditure on the part of the farmers is hardly synonymous with bad farming; a man may not be prepared, or may not be able to embark upon heavy additional expenditure whether he has got security of tenure or not, without being guilty of bad farming?—I take it that it is necessary certainly under the existing conditions of low prices that very high-class farming should be followed, that the only man who has a chance of making any money at those low prices is a man who farms in a really high-class manner.

10,049. Then it comes to this—if you are not prepared to go as far as saying bad farming—that at all events want of security of tenure has led to farmers not making the most of their opportunities?—Yes, I would say that.

Farming by occupying owners.

10,050. Are you aware of the fact that there are in all parts of the country a large number of holdings which are the property of their occupiers?—There are some of course.

10,051. Has your examination into agriculture led you to believe that where they are untrammelled by any doubt as to tenure, or any difficulty as to rent, their cultivation has been so much better and their expenditure so much more liberal, that they have prospered where others have failed?—Yes, in my own county I believe one of our witnesses, Mr. Worthington, of Wigan, will give you very specific evidence upon that point.

10,052. That is one individual case?—It is one typical case.

10,053. Is that the result of the examination of the country generally?—I am speaking of my knowledge of Lancashire. I know a good many farmers who own their own land and farm it, and they certainly are the best farmers I know of.

10,054. And they have prospered?—Yes.

10,055. And are prospering now?—Yes.

10,056. Is their prosperity directly to be attributed to the larger expenditure of capital?—Yes, and the more liberal use of manures, and improvements of that kind.

10,057. Then in the case where a man has capital your alterations would enable him to prosper where otherwise he would fail?—Yes, I believe so.

10,058. Take the case of a man without capital, or with a very limited amount of capital; have you considered what would be the immediate consequence of your system?—I do not know that I see any necessary consequence in such a case.

10,059. Would he not probably be able easier to get the capital?—If you notice I specially give the landlord the power to object to any proposed tenant if he has not sufficient means to make proper use of his holding.

Security of tenure and facilities for borrowing.

10,060. Yes, that is a valuable pious opinion, but it is rather difficult to carry out. What I wanted to get from you is this: In the case, of which there are a good many, of a man not having the capital necessary for these improvements to which you have referred, do you propose that by giving him security of tenure you would also give him opportunity to borrow the money upon the security of his holding?—I believe it would be much easier for him to borrow money to carry on his farming operations if he had absolute security.

10,061. One of your objects is to enable occupiers with greater ease to farm on borrowed capital?—No, that was not one of the objects.

10,062. One result?—I think that alteration would make it easier.

10,063. Do you think it a desirable result?—I do not see any objection to it.

10,064. You see no objection to a man farming on borrowed capital?—No, I do not say that. You may take too sweeping a conclusion from my answer. I think at present there is a fault on the part of farmers

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in many cases that they take too large farms for the capital which they have. I believe in many cases they would do better if they were confined to a smaller acreage, because if a man is short of capital he is tied in buying and selling both; he is not able to watch the markets and avail himself of the best turn of the market.

10,065. That is perfectly true no doubt, but that is hardly dealing with the particular point that I am trying to bring you to now. The whole of your evidence on this particular point rests upon your opinion that it is desirable that tenants should develop their farms by improvements?—Certainly.

10,066. But when a man takes a farm under one condition of agriculture, such, for instance, as existed between 1870 and 1880, how is he to calculate his resources so as to be able to go in for additional improvements in a subsequent period when the conditions of agriculture have entirely altered?—I do not quite see how I am to answer that, it is rather an involved question.

10,067. Perhaps without any reference to the question being involved, if you cannot answer it you will say so; it is a very simple question, there is nothing involved about it at all?—Perhaps you will kindly repeat it; perhaps I shall grasp it better then.

10,068. On a tenant entering a farm between the years 1870 and 1880 when agriculture was very different to what it is now, how could he estimate what he might be required to do in the direction of additional improvements in a subsequent period when the whole condition of agriculture was altered?—I should think a man would be a very exceptional man who could have anticipated 20 years ago that such a state of things was going to occur as has occurred since. The probability is that most of those men at that time had abundant capital to make those improvements, but owing to subsequent events they have lost it.

10,069. Then I understand you to suggest that under your improved system of tenure he would be in the possession of greater facilities for borrowing money in order to make those improvements which are rendered necessary by the altered conditions of agriculture?—I did not suggest it, you suggested it, and I do not dissent from it.

10,070. It does not matter so long as you do not dissent from it who suggests it. Then may I take it that one of your objects in giving a man greater security of tenure is to enable him with greater ease to borrow money?—It is one of the minor objects of the proposal; it is not one of the primary objects of the proposal. It is incidental, I think, to the changed state of affairs that he would be able to borrow money much easier; his banker, for instance, would allow him an overdraft much more readily than he would with his insecure tenure.

10,071. Take, for instance, what you have just said, that a banker would allow him an overdraft more easily, do you know, or not, whether it is the fact that bankers have been in the habit of allowing farmers very freely to overdraw during the best times?—I do not think very largely in our own neighbourhood. They may have done so in some other places.

10,072. They do not want it in your neighbourhood?—No, they are more in the habit of borrowing from their friends. A great many farmers borrow 100*l.* or 200*l.* on a promissory note from their relatives or friends of the family. What we find, when a farmer fails and the estate comes to be inquired into, is that he owed such sums. Sometimes I am afraid they borrow them at the start when they go on to the farm, and do not go on with their own money altogether.

10,073. They borrow it from their relatives, and not from the banks?—I think they borrow a great deal more from their relatives practically than they do from the bank.

10,074. At a high rate of interest?—No, I think there is a sort of religious opinion that 5 per cent. is the correct rate of interest among that class of people.

10,075. Then would you suggest that under your altered system they would be able to get it from the banks at a low rate of interest?—If the value of money continues as it is at present they would be able to get it at less than 5 per cent.—probably 4.

10,076. Giving a bill of sale on their stock?—I do not think so. A wise banker does not lend money on a bill of sale, because that has to be registered, and at once calls attention to it.

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10,077. Then what security would the banker have?—He would have no security other than the rest of the creditors. Bankers do not always lend on security.

Assignment of tenancy as security for loans.

10,078. (*Chairman.*) I suppose that the tenancy would be an assignable interest, and that that interest under your system could be deposited with the banker?—There would probably be no one fixed rule in those cases. Some bankers would lend without any security, others might not be willing to lend without something definite.

10,079. (*Mr. Long.*) I think the majority of bankers require security, do they not?—I do not think they do for small amounts, or if they do get security the common practice in those cases is to ask some friend to be bond for them. That, I think, is done in some 9 cases out of 10 with these small advances.

10,080. You do not think they would do as the Chairman suggests, that a tenant borrowing money from the bank would assign his tenancy?—He might do so, but I should not think that would be a general proceeding.

10,081. Supposing he did, is there any means in your Bill by which the landlord would know that an assignment has taken place?—No, there is not.

10,082. So that a tenant might assign his tenant right to somebody from whom he borrowed money without the knowledge of his landlord?—Yes, he would not assign anything belonging to the landlord, and I do not see why he should give the landlord notice.

Land Tenure Bill.

10,083. I think under your Bill it is provided that where there is a change of tenancy the tenant should be bound to provide a successor?—Yes, or he must remain on the holding for the judicial term.

Transfer of tenancy.

10,084. But if he has assigned his tenant-right to somebody else, how can he dispose of it?—If he has assigned it, it makes the position more difficult.

10,085. I take it he would have sold his rights to the banker who lent him the money, would he not?—I think that is very possible.

10,086. (*Mr. Channing.*) Does not the 13th section of your Bill provide that the landlord may within one month object to any person to whom the transfer may be made?—Yes.

10,087. I understood it to be so?—Quite so, but that is not the point.

10,088. (*Mr. Long.*) I am not asking you what the objects of the Bill are; I am trying to get from you what the effects of the Bill are; the objects may be excellent?—I think you worded it before that it was one of the objects of the Bill. I think if the shorthand writer would read back your previous question it would show that. There are many things that would follow as a consequence from the direct proposals.

10,089. Can we get at them then?—You are getting at some of them.

10,090. I want to know from you what would be the practical effect of the suggestions that you make in order to improve agriculture, whether one of them has not been correctly described by the Chairman?—That would be incident to the proposal, and I think would be in some cases very beneficial.

Land Tenure Bill and Irish Land Act compared.

10,091. You base your suggestions with regard to your proposal for agriculture upon the Irish Land Act?—Upon the proposals made in respect to Wales where the conditions are more nearly parallel to our own. I did not refer to any of the Irish Bills; I took as the basis of this Bill, Mr. Ellis' proposal.

10,092. But that is not in operation?—No, it was a Bill introduced into the House, and I got a copy of that, and that was the initiation.

10,093. The nearest approach to your suggestion which would be found in operation is in Ireland?—That is so; in Ireland.

10,094. I suppose you have studied the operation of the Land Act in Ireland, and its effect?—I have to some extent.

10,095. Have you studied it at all extensively on the spot?—No.

10,096. In different parts of Ireland?—I cannot say that I have within the last few years. I do not call the cases at all parallel.

10,097. You therefore do not suggest that you have made this proposal because of the result of the study of the operation of the Irish Act?—No, I feel that something needs doing, and this is the best thing that I can think of as a proposal; I am quite open to conviction as to any improvements either in principle or in detail.

Increased fertility by security of tenure.

10,098. To come now to the object, and not to the effect, your object is to improve the productive power of the country?—That is the main object. I think that ought to be the first consideration of every statesman.

10,099. You believe, as you say, I think, in answer to Question 9579, "I am quite certain of this, that "there is not one acre in a hundred in this country that "is farmed nearly up to the degree that it might be "farmed"?—I believe so.

10,100. You have, I suppose, studied agriculture in all parts of the country extensively?—Well, I have travelled about a good bit, and one hears a great deal from others who are acquainted with other counties.

10,101. Do you think that that remark applies to the high farming, for instance, of the great corn farms of the West of England?—I believe it applies generally; that very much more might be done.

10,102. Do you think it applies to Lord Leicester's estate?—I do not know his estate. I have the opinion of such men as the late Lord Derby and Sir James Caird, who have over and over again stated that the production of this country might be enormously increased.

10,103. (*Mr. Little.*) Without regard to expenditure? —I do not say without regard to expenditure.

10,104. Without regard to cost of production?—I think that would practically apply to profitable production, I mean to say, not presupposing any expenditure that would not be justified by the results. I do not mean to say that there is more land, and all this sort of thing, which might be cultivated, but which would not pay the cost of cultivation; I am excluding that from my view; I mean land that is now cultivated.

10,105. The statements that you quoted were not unqualified statements that the land could profitably produce twice as much as they now produce, were they? —Well, I presume that would be understood.

10,106. They were not so, I think?—There was very little use in making such a statement if that was not a part of it.

10,107. The qualification is or may be, that produce might be increased, and yet profits might be diminished? —I take it that this was part of a general argument that the country would be the gainer by better cultivation, and that such better cultivation was capable to a very large extent. The nation would gain nothing by cultivating lands for the sake of getting a little produce if there was a loss entailed thereby. I do not think men of the weight of either of those gentlemen I have named would advocate such a suicial policy.

Reductions of rent.

10,108. (*Mr. Long.*) You told us, with regard to rents in your neighbourhood, as I understand you to say, that the average reduction had been about 10 or 15 per cent.?—No; I would scarcely go so far as that; I think there are very many cases in which no reduction has been made at all.

10,109. Where reductions have been made?—Where reductions have been made they are 10 or 15 per cent. temporary remissions of rent. I do not think there is one case in ten where there has been a permanent reduction.

10,110. In your own case you told us that you had made a permanent reduction voluntarily of 33 per cent.?—I did not say in all the farms—in some cases.

10,111. No, but you quoted one particular farm?—Two.

10,111*a*. When using the word "voluntarily" did you mean that you could have got a better rent without difficulty at the time?—I meant that we did not seek to obtain higher rents than pratically we did obtain, and in one case the remission has been made to the sitting tenant—not in the case of a new letting.

10,112. Do you mean that you could have got a higher rent than that represented by your 550*l*. a year? —I do not know what we could have done if we had tried. We did not, in the existing state of things, think that the land was worth so much—it was quite self evident.

10,113. Were you offered a higher rent by anybody else?—No, I could not say that we were.

10,114. In other words you took the rent that was offered to you?—Yes; put it that way if you like.

10,115. But is that not what you did? I do not want to put it in any particular way; I am not trying to make any reference to your individual case; I only want to ascertain what you mean by a voluntary reduction?—I mean where a tenant is in possession of a farm, and has not given any notice, nor threatened to leave; if we reduce his rent, that is a voluntary reduction of rent.

10,116. Is that not what takes place in a vast number of instances? I only want to ascertain what the meaning of "voluntary reduction" is?—One reduction might be made under the threat of the tenant leaving; another might be made freely.

10,117. You merely mean, as the majority of landlords in the country have done, the rent has been reduced in consequence of the times, and not with the object of preventing the tenant leaving the farm?—Yes, you can put it that way if you like.

Land Tenure Bill.

10,118. Your Bill, of which we have got a copy here, has been generally approved by the Committee of the Federation of Farmers' Associations, of which you are president, I believe?—Yes; I had drawn the Bill before conferring with them—before the Federation had developed; but after having been elected president I thought it was only courteous to submit the Bill to them. I did not tie myself absolutely to engraft everything upon it which they might suggest, but I found that their suggestions were nothing but reasonable suggestions, and in some cases were suggestions really in the interests of the landlord rather than of the tenant, which would make the Bill fair, not one sided; and so I readily accepted them.

10,119. Have you been assisted in the consideration of the details of the Bill by anybody representing owners or labourers?—I may say that of some of these associations' members are owners.

10,120. Then would you put the Bill forward as one in the interests both of owner and of occupier?—I believe it is in the interests of all parties concerned. I myself, the framer of the Bill, am an owner on a small scale as I explained at first. I might say that I do not quote those cases of our own, showing remission of rent, to extol my own conduct.

Reductions of rent.

10,121. No; I understand?—I simply do it to show that where we have felt such reduction of rent necessary or advisable, in other lands adjoining no reductions have been made at all. I could quote you a case where the estate is in Chancery, and where they have been appealed to by the tenants who presented a petition first to the Lord Chancellor and after, by instruction and advice, to the judge in whose court the particular suit lay. Unfortunately no reduction has been made on that estate, which adjoins several of our own properties, and there is no power to obtain such a reduction because the tenants have no *locus standi* in the court.

10,122. Have they threatened to quit their farms?—Some of them have quitted them.

10,123. Have quitted?—Yes.

10,124. Have their places been filled?—I do not know whether they have or not; I think they are leaving just now—this spring. I do not anticipate that the farms will not be relet.

10,125. At the same rent?—Certainly not; some of them are leases, and I think some of them have been allowed to go without the lease having expired. They are leases of 8 or 10 years ago. There have been two dates during that series of years when I believe there have been two small remissions of rent of 5 or 10 per cent., or an allowance of compensation, or something of that sort, but there has been nothing done this last year or two. The tenants find their capital slipping away, and they have sought to be released.

Interest on permanent improvements.

10,126. You told us that at the end of five years, at the end of your statutory term, if the landlord had spent any money on improvements it might be possible to secure a revision of the rent in order to get a return of interest out of the tenant to the landlord in respect of the money so spent?—I think it is in this way; any money that has been spent by the landlord in permanent improvements, by agreement with the tenant, entitles the landlord to an extra charge even during the judicial period.

10,127. By agreement with the tenant?—Yes; if he erects any building for him.

10,128. In other words you would make the tenant the absolute judge as to what permanent improvements should be made upon the landlord's land?—No; I do not think it is in that way; I am not aware that it is usual now for landlords to erect new buildings, or things of that sort, except by request of the tenant. In some cases the landlord declines to accede to the tenant's request, and the tenant has to remain without those buildings. In this case if the landlord declined to erect them (for which he would be entitled to a reasonable rate of interest) then the tenant has power to go to the court, and the court may give him power to erect them at his own expense, and he would have a permanent interest in those buildings.

10,129. Surely it is the case that during the last, say, 25 years, enormous sums have been spent by landlords on the improvement of their properties?—That is so.

10,130. On their own initiative?—I do not say on their own initiative, unless farms come in hand, and the landlord then realises that new buildings are necessary. I think in 99 cases out of 100 they are built on request from the tenant that he wants a new barn, or new sheds, or something. He may or may not get what he asks for.

10,131. Are you not familiar with the practice of agents reporting regularly to the owners of property as to what they think it desirable to do, and making suggestions for improvements without notices to quit from the occupiers?—I do not think they do anything of that kind unless the matter has been initiated by the tenant. If they are going to relet a farm they might think this farm would be more marketable if we do so and so on it. In that case they might initiate it.

10,132. Are you not aware of the fact that there are a large number of large properties in the country upon which these changes have been of the fewest possible number?—Do you mean changes in occupation?

10,133. Changes in occupation, changes in tenants?—Yes; but I still say I should be exceedingly surprised to learn that the initiative in these cases, or any considerable per-centage of them, had come from the landlord or the agent.

10,134. Have you made inquiries into the systems which landowners and their agents pursue?—What do you mean by "made inquiries"? I have not travelled up and down the country and gone interviewing a great number of land agents, but I have been connected with agriculture, and my business brings me also in contact with agriculturists, and it is a matter of common conversation on things incidental to land tenure. I live in a country district, I do not live in a big manufacturing town.

10,135. You know nothing of the practice of agents so recommending the landlords, and of the landlords carrying out such improvements?—I never heard of any such, and I very much doubt their existence.

10,136. You are rather inclined to doubt the fact that enormous sums have been spent by landlords in improving their property?—No, excuse me, do not misinterpret what I say. Freely I admit the large sums, but the initiative does not come from the landlord or the agent.

Disposal of tenant right under Land Tenure Bill.

10,137. Now I should like to know what you think would be the benefit to the future tenant under your Bill; the present tenant of course will get security of tenure?—So would the future tenant, exactly the same—all succeeding tenancies would.

10,138. Yes, but the present tenant having got his tenant-right will probably not give up his farm without disposing of his tenant-right; it will be saleable, will it not?—He will only be able to realise the capitalised value of the improvements he himself has made.

10,139. But will not he be able to deal with the incoming tenant?—He has to deal with the incoming tenant. The way I assess the increased letting value of the farm is what the incoming tenant estimates the improvements to have been worth.

10,140. Will he not be able to dispose of his tenant-right, so to speak?—I do not think so. He might in the case we mentioned the other day—in the case of a considerable advance in prices—for a portion of his judicial term get a little advantage in that way. But that is not my object. My object is simply to allow the tenant to be absolutely secure of realising the improvement which he himself has made.

10,141. On the view that the provisions of your Bill left it open for a tenant to sell his tenant-right in addition to the capitalised value of his improvements, would you so alter it as to make that impossible?—You could do it by shortening the judicial period, in which case it would be less likely to occur. He would be liable during the five years to get a greater sum for the improvements he had made if the market value of the farm had risen; on the other hand, if there had been a decline of values, he would get the value of his improvements less the difference in price from natural causes. It cuts both ways.

Fair rents.

10,142. One question more only: In order to fix this fair rent you propose that the rent should be what is left after the tenant-farmer has paid his expenses, and a reasonable cost of living?—Yes; I take it that one definition of rent might be given as the difference between the cost of producing the article and the value of the article when it is produced.

10,143. Plus the tenant's living expenses?—In my part of the country, where the tenant and his family all work, and assist in the production, they are surely worthy of their hire, just the same as an ordinary farm labourer.

10,144. That would only apply to the smaller farms?—It applies to all the farms in our district. I do not know of any single case where the wife and sons and daughters of the farmer do not take an active part in all the operations on the farm.

10,145. Your Bill is not limited to your district—your Bill would apply to the whole country?—That is so.

10,146. You have not studied either the conditions on the larger tenancies in other parts of England as closely?—I do not know what you mean by "studied" them. I have not given up myself entirely for any number of weeks or months to travel up and down the country to investigate these things on the spot. I am a business man, and I have done the best I could with the opportunities I had.

10,147. You have not had an opportunity of making yourself familiar with the conditions of agriculture in those parts of England where the farms are to a greater extent large farms?—Except where I have attended meetings and heard these matters discussed by men from all parts of the country.

10,148. What I meant was, have you had any opportunities of studying on the spot the system of letting farms and of cultivating them by the occupiers in the districts where the farms are large rather than small?—I am pretty well conversant with Cumberland, Westmoreland, Lancashire, and Cheshire, and the West Riding of Yorkshire. In Westmoreland and Cumberland some of the farms are very large, but the size of the farm does not determine its value, because much of the land is hill pasturage and that sort of thing. Do you mean by a large farm merely the acreage? Still the principle would hold good, I think, for all farms.

10,149. I understood you in reference to my question as to what a reasonable cost of living to the occupier would be to answer me by referring to the fact that the majority of the occupiers were engaged in working on the farm?—Yes.

10,150. And were, in other words, practically wage-earners?—Yes.

10,151. I ask you whether that would apply to agricultural holdings generally over the country?—I do not think it would. My knowledge is sufficient to say that in some counties farmers have been accustomed to live more in the style of gentlemen.

10,152. Necessarily on a big farm, say a farm of 1,500 acres, a man must keep up an expenditure which is rather larger than in the case of a farm of 50 acres?—I should not expect a farmer on a large farm to take a part in menial work. I think his time and his energy and ability are very much better devoted to the superintendence and direction of the operations of the farm. A man who keeps a small shop stands behind the counter; a man who has a large wholesale establishment spends his time in the counting-house, but none the less contributes to the prosperity of the affair.

10,153. How do you propose, in the case of the larger farms, that the county court judge could fix the reasonable cost of living?—The county court judge decides finally, but he is advised in this matter by practical men and men who belong to the particular districts in which the court is situate. I do not propose to take men from Lancashire to assess the value of farms in Lincolnshire or other counties. They are men residing on the spot with a practical knowledge of the whole subject.

10,154. They would need to have a practical knowledge of housekeeping as well as of agriculture?—I suppose pretty much every man has a knowledge of housekeeping.

10,155. That is how you propose to get at the value? —That is the best proposal I have found myself able to make.

10,156. Do you propose that the valuer should take into consideration the wages paid by the occupier to his men?—Certainly.

Labourers' wages in relation to rent.

10,157. And has he to decide whether the wages are fair wages or not?—No, the general run of the markets would decide that, but in estimating the rent the valuers would have to estimate what the man has to pay—what the current wages of the district are.

10,158. Do you mean what he actually pays?—Yes, what he is paying.

10,159. Or what he ought to pay in the shape of labour in respect of a certain farm?—No.

10,160. What he actually pays?—They would estimate what number of hands would be required, and they know the current rate of wages for those hands.

10,161. Would you leave it to them to decide how much labour ought to be employed on the farm?—No, they would not be able to dictate to the tenant, and to say you must keep 5 or 6, or 20 men. They would have to estimate what they thought was necessary.

10,162. Quite irrespective of how many he might employ?—If he employed more hands in making improvements, which I take it under this Bill he would —that is a point on which I have never had an opportunity of touching before—I think it would cause very much greater employment of labour; new works of all kinds would be put in hand.

Circulation of Land Tenure Bill.

10,163. Has your Bill been circulated amongst Chambers of Agriculture all over the country?—It has to some extent.

10,164. Down south, or west, or east?—It has been a good deal commented on in the newspapers—such papers as the "Mark Lane Express," and other agricultural papers—and it has led to inquiries for copies of the Bill. I have had a great many myself, and I know many Members of Parliament who have had over a dozen copies and circulated them in their district. Almost every day I get requests for copies.

10,165. You are not aware that any discussions have taken place in the different Chambers of Agriculture, and whether resolutions have been passed with regard to it?—No; there was a discussion at the Cheshire Chamber of Agriculture the other day on very similar lines. I did not deal with the Bill by name, but with the principles in the Bill.

Tenancies under the Land Tenure Bill.

10,166. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You define a contract of tenancy in your Bill as meaning "a letting of, or agree- "ment for the letting of, land, from year to year, or "for a term not exceeding five years"?—Yes.

10,167. What is the object of that definition?—I may say that that is copied bodily from the other Bill.

10,168. Its effect will be to limit the Bill, or at least a great many provisions of the Bill to short agreements?—I intend the Bill to cover all; that there should be no other lettings than the lettings under the Bill, with a few exceptions. I believe I was misunderstood the other day as to the exceptions. Demesne lands and home farms are exempted under the Bill; but as regards all other tenancies, I wanted them to come under the Bill.

10,169. Do you propose to prohibit the letting for a longer period than that?—The letting, although ostensibly for five years, is for ever, and it is only the rent which may be changed upon the application of either party.

Leases under Land Tenure Bill.

10,170. Did you intend it to apply to past contracts of longer terms?—No; leases are brought under it only on the expiration of the lease.

10,171. You have one clause by which either party to a contract of tenancy, present or future, may apply to get a judicial rent?—Yes.

10,172. Is it not intended by that, that a man who took his lease several years ago, and who has got a long lease may apply?—No. Clause 15 says, "At the ex- "piration of leases of holdings existing at the date of "the passing of this Act, and which were originally "granted or held for lives or a life," they may come in then. A person who is on a farm now as tenant from year to year may at once apply to the court and have a judicial rent fixed.

10,173. Then the object is that you should not relieve a tenant who is now holding a long lease?—To void just contracts would be a more sweeping proposal even than the Bill makes. There may have been very valuable considerations in the contract.

10,174. (*Chairman.*) You do not propose to break a present lease then?—I do not propose to break any existing lease, because at the expiration of the lease the leaseholders would become tenants from year to year, and would have the powers of the Act open to them.

10,175. Do you think that it would not be just to break a present lease?—One has to look to the possibility of carrying a measure into law, and I think it is perhaps quite sufficiently drastic as it is to find acceptance. In the case of Ireland, I believe leaseholders were excepted. I am quite willing personally that there should be due consideration given to the terms of the lease, the conditions under which the lease was granted.

10,176. (*Viscount Cobham.*) It is a small question now, is it not practically?—I think year by year the number of leases is becoming fewer.

10,177. There are very few now in Lancashire, are there?—There are some of course that really were taken out 10, 12, or 14 years years ago.

10,178. (*Mr. Dalton.*) When a farm falls vacant after the passing of the Bill, and there are several competitors for it bidding various prices, some high and some low, either party on the day after they have completed may go for a judicial rent?—Completed what?

10,179. Completed the contract for the hiring of the farm, some having offered a high rent, and some a low rent?—That would not occur. There is no competition except as to tenant's improvements.

Letting of farms under the Land Tenure Bill.

10,180. I was assuming that you have got a farm which you are going to let some time after the Bill is passed, when an existing lease falls in. At present I suppose some offer a high rent, and some offer a low rent?—That is so now.

10,181. What would they do when the Bill passes?— Under the Bill, the man who is in possession of the farm is the man who would remain in possession of the farm if he wishes.

10,182. I mean in one of these cases where you have to put a farm up to let. It is not to apply to existing leases, I understand?—Not to existing leases.

10,183. There will be many cases where the tenant will go, the farm will be vacant, and will be put up to be let?—I take it that if there is a farm absolutely vacated, the landlord would let it just as he would do under other circumstances.

10,184. Just so, that is my case. Then you get some offering a high rent, and some offering a low rent for it?—Yes, I suppose that would be so.

10,185. But then it is a bargain which may be set aside the very next day under the Bill, I suppose, because then either of them may go for a judicial rent? —No, I do not think so. The landlord would choose his own tenant, and the tenant would not be free to avail himself of this until the end of the five years.

10,186-200. That is not so as the Bill stands, is it?—I think you will find—I could not just name the exact clause—that there is nothing to prevent the landowner and tenant agreeing upon any point and notifying it to the court when it becomes a judicial agreement. I think you will find that somewhere in the Bill.

Agreements under Land Tenure Bill

10,201. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You say in clause 7, "either "party to a contract of tenancy, present or future, may "apply to the Land Court to fix" the judicial rent?— Yes.

10,202. So that in any case of any future tenancy, the moment you have got an agreement made, either party may apply to the Land Court to alter it?—Yes.

10,203. Is that what is intended?—Yes, I think my first view is right that there is no five years' period within which the man would be fast with the rent, and that he may apply at any period after he is admitted a tenant, but that he must not apply more than once in five years. I think, reading clause 7 with clause 10, my first construction of the Act is the proper one, namely, that at any time after being admitted as tenant either party may apply to the court to vary the rent; but having made the application, and the rent having been fixed for another five years, he may not make another application until the five years have expired.

10,204. (*Mr. Channing.*) That is to say future contracts are entered into subject to the right to have a statutory fixing of rent at any time within the usual term of an agricultural notice?—Yes, that is if there is any change in the market value of the land.

10,205. (*Chairman.*) Is that a correction of your statement just now that you respect contracts for five years?—I think after refreshing my memory by clause 7 and taking that in conjunction with clause 10, a private compact entered into would not be binding for any fixed number of years until it had been made a judicial contract by application to the court on the side of one or the other.

10,206. And the court then would have the right of revising it?—Yes.

10,207. On the application of either party?—Yes, and having once revised it it would remain for five years.

10,208-9. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Then the court might revise it the very day after it had been entered into?—That would practically be so.

Land Courts.

10,210. (*Chairman.*) The only thing conceded to the landlord is that he has the right of the selection of one out of many applicants for the farm; he takes which of the applicants he likes but he cannot define the rent?—No.

Revision of rents.

10,211. The quantum of rent is always subject to being revised the next day by the court?—I do not think that would be the practice because if the rent was fairly assessed at the time of letting a tenant would not go into court for the sake of going into court.

10,212. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Assume that you have one tenant who is willing to pay a low rent and another tenant who is willing to pay a high rent; if the landlord accepts the tenant who gives a low rent he may take him into court the next day and get a judicial rent fixed which is a higher rent than the tenant is willing to pay. On the other hand he may accept the man who offers a high rent and that man may take him in and get a judicial rent which is lower?—Yes, I think that would work with advantage because we had it brought prominently forward yesterday that there is undue competition between tenants and that they offer rents sometimes now which they cannot really afford to pay.

10,213. In some cases the landlord might make the tenant pay a higher rent under this Bill than he was willing to pay after he had accepted him as tenant?—The rent would be always proved to have been a just rent because it would be fixed by impartial persons.

10,214. It might be a just rent but it might be a rent that a tenant was not at all willing to pay, and he might only be desirous of taking the farm at a low rent?—He would do it with his eyes open.

10,215. Is it not hard on both parties?—He would do it with his eyes open; he would know what the Act was, and what its workings would be.

10,216. It is a very great interference with the freedom of contract of both parties?—The whole Bill, of course, contemplates very great interference with that in the national, the general, interest.

10,217. Would not the Bill be very injurious to tenants in districts where the value of the land is falling; you would get a judicial rent fixed for five years?—Yes.

10,218. And even if the rent were falling the tenant would have to pay that rent for five years, whereas if he kept on the holding from year to year he would get the benefit of the fall in value?—Yes; but the man who is in possession need not go to the court to have a judicial rent fixed unless he wishes.

10,219. Either party may go to the court?—Yes, either party may go to the court; the landlord would not be very likely to go to the court to reduce the rent.

10,220. No, but to get a fixed rent for five years?—In regard to the question of the term of years, as I said the other day, my own preference was in favour of a shorter term. You cannot enter upon a contract without some little bit of speculation, some little bit of risk in it whatever commodity it is you are dealing in.

10,221. When you are entering upon a contract the two parties are willing to come to those terms, but under the Bill those terms might be upset against either party almost immediately afterwards?—Yes.

10,222. Do you know of any similar legislation in other countries where you can upset contracts in that way?—Do you mean in connexion with land.

10,223. In connexion with any subject matter, land or anything else, where after you have entered into a contract one day either party may go the next day and have it varied?—I take it that this is an exceptional state of things which has arisen; and if everything is to have a precedent there is perhaps one for this in some section of the Irish Land Act.

10,224. (*Chairman.*) I do not think there is any precedent for that in the Irish Land Act?—I do not see where it would work practical injustice at all.

10,225. (*Mr. Dalton.*) One man may be willing to pay a low rent, and another a higher one from special circumstances?—The landlord I take it would choose the most substantial man, and the man he thought would be the best tenant in every way.

10,226. Yes; but then the best tenant may be the one who offers the low rent, and yet he is saddled with a higher rent?—Of course he has this before him, that he knows the court is there to be invoked by either party; the probability is that a landlord would choose the best tenant apart from the rent.

10,227. Would not the knowledge that a contract might be set aside the next day make both parties very unwilling to enter into contracts?—They will have to enter into contracts, or the farms will have to remain empty.

10,228. Just so, may not that very likely be the result of it?—It practically means this: the landlord says, I am willing to take such a man for my tenant, and the court shall fix the rent, which is a fair one, that he should pay. It practically amounts to that.

10,229. You have got security of tenure here for the tenant, but he may go away at any time, I understand?—No.

Security of tenure and change of tenancy.

10,230. May he not from year to year?—He may by finding a successor.

10,231. He is not bound to find a successor, is he?—I take it that he is doing the judicial term.

10,232. (*Chairman.*) Or he is bound to remain for five years?—Yes.

10,233. (*Mr. Dalton.*) He can stay on at the end of five years if he likes?—Yes.

10,234. But he is not bound to find the landlord a tenant for another five years?—No.

10,235. So that although there is security to the tenant there is no security to the landlord that he would let his land at all?—It might not be to a man's interest to remain on, the man gets old, perhaps, and unable to follow the occupation of farming, or the man dies, and perhaps no member of his family is suitable to continue it. I am afraid that to compel the man to remain on the farm would do a great injustice to the owner.

10,236. You give the landlord practically a rentcharge?—Yes.

10,237. Which is determined at the end of the tenancy?—Yes.

10,238. You do not secure him any rentcharge in perpetuity, but you give the tenant a right in perpetuity if it serves his purpose to keep on?—I do not think I should be consulting the interests of the owner of the land if I did not deal with it in that way.

10,239. That is the effect of the Bill?—That is the effect of the Bill. My intention is that the tenant may be able to leave at the end of his tenancy if from any cause he is desirous of leaving, and there is no obligation on him to find a successor. But if he has made improvements, as I take it he would in the majority of cases, it would be to his interest, or the interests of those representing him if he has died, to find a successor, because it is from that successor that he is to get compensation.

Land Tenure Bill.

10,240. (*Mr. Lambert.*) I understand that this Bill is not exactly your own Bill, but is the Bill of the Federation which you represent?—Yes. I do not know whether I have explained fully how it came about. I determined to bring in such a Bill when the time for what was supposed to be the second reading was coming on. I had rather to hurry its preparation, and I took the Welsh Bill as the basis. I thought that had been very carefully thought out by a man acquainted with the subject, and I engrafted upon it such changes as I thought necessary.

10,241. But you are not the only one to approve of the principle of this measure?—No; it has the sanction of our Federation. We have had one or two special meetings, and considered it line by line.

10,242. I presume very experienced men belong to that Federation?—Yes, that is so.

10,243. Has the principle of this Bill been approved of in any of the southern counties?—Yes, it has. At various places where I have addressed meetings resolutions in favour of the principle of the Bill have been adopted.

10,244. Of course I am not speaking now of every detail of the Bill, which I presume you are not altogether wedded to?—I am not wedded to them all.

10,245. It is the principle of securing to the tenants fixity of tenure and compensation for his improvements which you aim at?—Yes.

10,246. This principle is approved by the members of your Federation?—Yes.

10,247. Numbering five or six thousand, you said?—Yes.

10,248. Have you had many advantages in securing that very large number of members?—No. I think our membership to-day would have been more likely to be fifty or sixty thousand if we had had real organization. Everything has been done by voluntary effort up till now. We have not even had a paid secretary. If we had at command a tithe of the money which Lord Winchilsea appears to have at his command I do not hestitate to say that the dimensions of the organization would be very much larger. I have announced my intention not to contest my seat again, and I contemplate in the future devoting my time more to this organization. I think I can do more good outside Parliament than in. I find the ground very ripe for this movement.

10,249. Is the feeling in favour of the principle of this measure confined to one political party?—No, it is not.

10,250. Do members of both political parties belong to your organization?—Yes, they do.

Reduction of rents.

10,251. You say in some cases rents have not been reduced at all?—That is so in many cases; in my own neighbourhood, in fact, I might say in the majority of cases.

Competition for farms.

10,252. Is there a great competition for farms?—Yes, there is reasonable competition for farms—not so great as there was.

10,253. Are there any cases in which the rent has been forced up artificially by one tenant bidding against the other?—Yes, there are many such cases. I believe they have been let by tender. The common way of letting farms has been by tender.

10,254. I presume the tenant on being dispossessed of his farm would suffer considerable loss, which you wish to prevent?—Yes, an improving tenant would, but with the bad sort of tenants, of course it would be otherwise.

Land Courts.

10,255. You were asked yesterday questions suggesting that there had been a great block in the Land Courts in Ireland?—Yes, I was.

10,256. Would the necessities of this country be so great as to cause a block here?—The necessity is great, but I do not think myself that a block would occur with some reasonable provision to strengthen the hands of the County Court judges.

Fair rent.

10,257. Some mention has been made of the fact that the fixing by an outside tribunal of a rent, would create bad feeling between landlord and tenant; are you of that opinion?—I think at the outset perhaps the landowners would not like this interference with what has been their custom in the past, but I think they would very soon get reconciled to it and would see its fairness, and that the working of it would be satisfactory.

10,258. Would it be the fact that where a man is paying more rent than he can afford to pay, he has not a very—what shall I say—agreeable feeling towards his landlord?—No; if he feels that he is bound to pay a bigger rent than is a fair rent, his feelings will not be very agreeable, that is to say, if he asks for a remission, and does not get it.

10,259. There is also some uncertainty, I believe, of the land changing hands, whereby a good landlord, it may be, to-day is replaced by an indifferent kind of landlord, it may be, to-morrow?—That is a very important thing. I think the position of the tenant under the Bill would be immensely better. This was asked me on the first day, and I did not perhaps reply to it as clearly as I should have done. A man may have to-day a very good landlord in whom he has every confidence, but he has no surety that that man will continue to be his landlord. He may die, or the estate may be sold, and the man who succeeds him may be a man of a totally different character, under whom he would not have made the contract. Under the Bill he would have the absolute certainty that in all cases an impartial and competent tribunal would be the one to fix his rent and the conditions.

10,260. You give the landlord the option of resuming the tenancy by paying to his tenant a fair price for his tenant-right?—That is so—to pay him the sum which may have been agreed upon between the outgoing tenant and the incoming tenant, but subject to the revision of the court in case the landlord can show that it is an equitable one.

Agreements under the Land Tenure Bill.

10,261. Would you compel the landlord and the tenant to go to the court if they could come to a mutual arrangement?—A mutual arrangement as to what?

10,262. As to the conditions of holding and tenancy?—No, I think there is a special proviso somewhere, either that they may appoint one person to settle any point like that between them, or that they may agree between themselves, and by reporting it to the court it is made official—it is reported on the books of the court exactly the same as if a long case had been gone through.

Objects of Land Tenure Bill.

10,263. You were asked just now whether the tenant would borrow money on his tenant-right; was that the chief object for which you drafted this Bill?—No, I must say I really never thought of it before it was named to me in this room just now.

10,264. So you drafted the measure upon entirely different grounds?—I drafted the measure with a view to placing the tenants in such a position that they might do the best by the land, and do justice to themselves.

10,265. And you think such a measure would be of benefit to the nation at large?—I feel that very strongly myself, and that I think is the strongest ground for the Bill. I think we have a right to interfere with existing institutions in the interests of the nation, in respect to land more perhaps than in respect to any other article.

10,266. Why do you think you should interfere with respect to the land more than in any other article?—The land of the nation is a limited quantity, and I take it that so-called owners, &c., are merely trustees for the nation. There can be no absolute ownership in an article which is really necessary to the existence of the nation.

Effect on (*a*) Labourers.

10,267. How do you think it would affect the position of the labourers?—I think it would be of very great benefit. I think that incidentally it might be the means of solving one of the most difficult problems of the day, that is, stopping the inrush of the people from the country to the towns, and even drawing them back from the overcrowded towns to the country, because I believe under such security as the Bill gives an immense amount of additional labour would be employed upon the land.

(*b*) Fertility of soil.

10,268. Would you anticipate that a large increase in the productive power of the country would accrue from the passing of a measure framed upon these principles?—A very large increase indeed, I believe.

10,269. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Did you intend this Bill to apply to Wales?—No, because the Royal Commission in respect to Wales had been appointed at the time I drafted this Bill, and I thought I ought not to extend it to Wales.

Mortgaged farms.

10,270. Are you in sympathy with farmers who bought their farms about 20 years ago with borrowed money, and who find now that they are paying more interest at the rate of 3½ per cent. and 4 per cent. for the money they borrowed at that time than the rents would be?—There are no such cases in my own neighbourhood, but when I was in Lincolnshire a few weeks ago I heard of a number of such cases in one district there, where they were very anxious that the Government should provide money with which they might pay off their existing mortgages, and that the Government should lend them money at a reduced rate. I had several persons approach me on that point.

10,271. Do you not think your Bill ought to provide for them as well as for the other tenants?—If I could be shown how to incorporate it, I should be very glad to do so for this coming session.

Fall in prices.

10,272. (*Mr. Everett.*) You were speaking of the fall in the prices of produce in your early evidence, and you said that down to a few years ago farmers in England had a practical monopoly of the markets; are you not aware that, from the time of the passing of free trade, the facilities of transport from different countries kept increasing at quite as great a rate in the first thirty years after, as they have done in the last few years?—I do not think so; I think the ratio of improvement has been very much greater during recent years; first of all there are the compound and triple expansion engines for steamers; steamers now can be made to pay at freights that never would have been dreamt of as remunerative freights a very few years ago.

10,273. But still I thought that the era following from about 1846, for the next 20 years, saw a larger development of mechanism and steam than the last 10 years have done, and that steam was not much used prior to that date?—Those in business now know that steamers are very largely displacing sailing ships in almost every channel, and although in one sense development must have been very great in degree then, it has been very much greater recently, that is to say, the improvements in the speed of ships, and secondly, the rate at which they can afford to carry produce have developed very rapidly during recent years.

10,274. The construction of railways and the introduction of steam vessels all date from the passing of Free Trade, or nearly so, and were developing with considerable rapidity, as much in the first 30 years, as they have done in the last?—Yes, but we have a very much larger body of scientific men now devoting their attention to the perfecting of all those problems. Very much has been done in recent years, and something more will be done, I take it, in electricity as well as steam.

Land Tenure Bill.

Landlords' and tenants' interest.

10,275. Then in regard to the Land Bill that contemplates there being two interests in the land, as of course there are two interests in the land—the landowner will have as his interest the land itself, and the tenant will have as his interest the beneficial occupation of any improvements which he makes upon the land?—Yes; the landowner will have not only the land, but he will have the buildings, and all other improvements which he himself may have made at any time, but the tenant will have the increased value of the land which results from his efforts.

10,276. From his improvements?—Yes, from his efforts.

10,277. And all such value as is attached to the occupation of the land—he would be the tenant in possession?—Yes.

10,278. He will have the tenant-right?—Yes.

10,279. Then with regard to these two interests; as I understand you, the landlord is not to have the full market value of his interest—that is to be limited by the finding of the Court?—I take it the finding of the Court would be the fair market value.

Value of improvements.

10,280. In regard to the other interest, the tenants' improvements and the occupation of the land, you propose no such restriction, but the value of that is to be settled by the unlimited competition of the market?—There is a modified restriction, inasmuch as the landlord has the right of, shall I say, appeal against that bargain; he may appeal to the Court to set it aside on the ground of an unfair sum having been given, or on the ground that the man to whom it is sold is not a suitable man. It is a modified right you may say.

10,281. In the event of the times continuing good, the tenant in possession at the time this Bill is passed would have a something which he would be able to sell to an incoming tenant for more than it had cost him probably; he would have the full market value of his improvements and he would have whatever the value of the occupation as an occupation was adjudged to be by a competing incoming tenant, and he would get the full competition price for those two things?—I think I would like to say two things in reply to that. First, it is my object that a man should not get the compensation based merely upon the cost to him of those improvements; I think that is a mistake. I think one man may, by the expenditure of 100*l.*, make as great an improvement as another man with less judgment and skill may make with an expenditure of 150*l.*; and so I want the value of the improvement itself to be the measure of value and not the mere cost. Again the landlord being allowed to go to the Court to object to a bargain which has been made, practically would mean that he would leave it to the Court and the assessors attached to the Court to say what the increased value of those improvements was, and they might by that means exclude any fancy value which had been given from the eagerness of the men to get on the land, because after the first year we should have on record always in the Court the exact state of that land when the man entered upon it, and all subsequent revisions of rents would be there to refer to, and the Court could always say whether it was an unreasonable sum which had been paid. I think they could stop all land hunger by that means.

Competition for purchase of tenant right.

10,282. Of course, you are aware that in this small island, where there are so many who desire farms, and so few farms to have, in good times there are always tenants willing to give more than the land is really fairly worth to yield a living, and what they are willing to give is restrained on many of the estates by the good sense of the landlord, who really does not allow one tenant to outbid another to the extreme point?—I think there is still power under this Bill to prevent any such unwise competition.

10,283. The court would have a little restriction over the competition in bidding for the tenant's part of the holding?—Yes. The landlord is to have notice, both of the person coming, and of the amount agreed, and he would have power to have to ask the court to say whether that was a reasonable sum, and if not, to vary it.

10,284. The point that my mind was on was this: that I can see that your plan might in good times be an excellent thing for the sitting tenant, but for all tenants that follow him it would cease to be beneficial, because they would have to give competition value for the tenant's side, though that competition was restrained in regard to the landlord's part?—No. I take it that the operation would be this: the assessors would first of all go over the farm, and they would value it as a farm in its present condition as being worth so and so, and then so much would belong to the man who has made the improvements; therefore the landlord's interest would be the balance.

10,285. Then turning to bad times, and to cases which unhappily are frequent to-day in the Eastern counties where no tenant at any price at all can be got for the farm, in what kind of a place would your sitting tenant be in regard to compensation for his improvements then? Would he not be in a worse place than he is under the Agricultural Holdings Act to-day?—I do not know. They are in a very unfortunate position if there are many of them who have improvements of value, but I should be afraid that in these very bad counties there are no improvements belonging to the tenant, and that the unlettable character of the land arises very largely from the fact that the farming has not been good.

Compensation for improvements.

10,286. (*Chairman.*) As I understand the Bill, if the tenant fails to sell to an incoming tenant, and at the end of the judicial year wishes to give up his holding, he would be entitled to do so, and then could claim under the Agricultural Holdings Act, and also under this Bill; is that not so?—Yes.

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10,287. The Agricultural Holdings Act is kept alive ?—It is incorporated in this Bill.

10,288. It is incorporated in this Bill to some extent as extended by clause 10 ?—Yes.

10,289. Therefore if the tenant fails to find a purchaser for his holding, and at the end of five years no longer wishes to continue in his farm, he could give it up and claim under the Agricultural Holdings Act and this Bill for the value of the improvements—that I understand to be the Bill as it stands ?—Yes, and I think that is quite fair, because if the land is worth little as it is now, it would be worth still less had he not made those improvements, and he ought to have the value from someone.

10,290. (*Mr. Everett.*) Does it not come to this, that in good times he would get the competition value of his improvements, and in bad times he would be saved by the Agricultural Holdings Act from losing the low competitive value of his improvements ?—He would get the competitive value to a certain extent, always subject to that fair revision by the court which I have named.

State loans.

10,291. The only other question I want to ask you has been partly asked. It is with regard to mortgages. Where the court had to fix the rent upon land subject to mortgage, does it not strike you as very hard that they should be allowed to deal with the income of the landowner without also dealing with the obligations which the landowner had incurred ?—I was advised, I believe wrongly, when I was quite new to Parliament, and when I was drafting this Bill, that no private Member had a right to put money clauses in a Bill, and I did not think it right therefore to put into this Bill any clauses which would cause the Government to find money for that purpose. Therefore that clause was not inserted, but I should be willing to embody clauses which would deal with the cases you name. I think it is perfectly fair that some provision should be made to meet them.

10,292. (*Chairman.*) When you speak of money clauses, do you contemplate the State compensating the mortgagee ?—No. I think the Government might find money to pay off the existing mortgages at a lower rate, which would of course benefit the whole of the property very much. They are paying 4 per cent. in most cases now.

10,293. You contemplate that the Government should advance money ?—Yes; advance money, I mean.

10,294. By way of mortgage ?—Yes.

10,295. (*Mr. Everett.*) Does it appear to you that the position of a money lender is more sacred than the position of a landowner ? Does it appear to you equitable that you should be able to deal with the income of a landowner arbitrarily, and not be able to deal with the position of a money lender arbitrarily too ?—I take it that all these mortgages are subject to a certain notice, and that if the landowner knew where the money could come from at a lower rate of interest he would have no difficulty in keeping to his terms of the contract, and paying off the existing contract at a high rate of interest, and reducing it to a low rate.

10,296. I think I gathered from the answer you gave to Captain Owen Thomas, that you would not think it inequitable that the State should interfere in the case of occupying landowners who have bought their lands, and are subject to mortgages which they cannot pay the rent of now; you would not be unwilling that the State should help them by the loan of money at a low rate ?—Certainly not. The State would be no loser by it directly, and indirectly would be a gainer by improving the position of those men.

Land tenure abroad.

10,297. (*Mr. Elton.*) You were asked a question whether you had given your attention to cases in foreign countries. I think there are volumes of reports on landed tenures in various foreign countries. Did you go into them before you drafted your Bill ?—I do not know which volumes you refer to.

10,298. There are blue books on the subject ?—I have not studied those, but I have read the work by the Chairman here, which is a recent issue.

10,299. The Government some years ago ordered the Consuls to report on the landed tenures in the different parts of Europe ?—I cannot say that I have studied those.

10,300. Then that will save my asking you whether you have studied the Dutch system of usufruct and fee farm holdings ?—I have not studied the Dutch system.

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Tenants-at-will under Land Tenure Bill.

10,301. The Bill, I see, applies to tenancy in general, and it includes tenants at will, I understand, or would it not include tenants at will ?—It includes certain tenancies, and it excludes the leaseholds.

10,302. (*Chairman.*) By the definition in clause 33 it only applies to contracts of tenancy—— ?—From year to year.

10,303. (*Mr. Elton.*) That, no doubt, would be a counsel of perfection for the Bill, but the Bill itself says "contract of tenancy"—a tenancy at will, I presume, is a tenancy ?—It is a contract of tenancy which means a letting of, or an agreement for the letting of, land from year to year.

10,304. Then the contract of tenancy on page 12 will exclude the tenant at will ?—Yes, it is on page 11, and it is continued on page 12.

10,305. Of course some generations ago, before a tenancy from year to year was so much adopted, nothing was more commmon than tenants at will, and farms were generally held on a tenancy at will, with covenants, or provisions, or agreements which protected the various parties. Your Bill would not affect a state of things like that ?—No. Such a state of things has not been brought under my notice.

10,306. I do not wish to press it, but I wish to ask you whether your Bill would meet the case of two people not wishing to be bound by an ironclad Bill like this—whether suppose they reverted to a tenancy at will with covenants, the Bill would affect their case in any way ?—I could not say; I have not contemplated such a state of things. I have not been brought in contact with such tenancies.

Maintenance of buildings.

10,307. In clause 3 I see there are provisions about tenants committing or permitting waste by the dilapidation of buildings. May I take it that you do not intend to make any such general change as that the tenant shall be obliged to keep all the buildings in repair which now perhaps by agreement he has not to keep in repair ?—My own intention was that the tenant should keep those buildings in repair. I have got a note on the side here that our Federation have wished me to amend this Bill during the coming session, so as to admit of ordinary wear and tear being excepted. Personally, I felt that in my judgment it would be a fair thing that the tenant should keep the buildings in the state in which he finds them.

10,308. I am very much obliged to you, because we wanted an explanation of that kind. I take it then that your clause is intended to increase a stringency of the law of waste; not merely to replace it, but to give the landlord that extra benefit which you have explained ?—Yes, I mean that the interest which the landlord hands over to the tenant shall be kept intact —that the obligation upon the tenant should be to retain it in that state, and the further parts of that clause refer to the power of the landlord to get quit of a tenant who is allowing the land to deteriorate. That and the non-payment of rent is the ground upon which a tenant may still be evicted from his farm.

10,309. I will not go into small things that might be clerical errors, but I notice "deterioration of the soil." I suppose that would be amended to include buildings and so on. You see it in the last line of sub-section 2 ? —It says, "The tenant shall not, to the prejudice of the interest of the landlord in the holding, commit or permit"——

10,310. Just after that, "specified in such notice by "the deterioration of the soil" ?—I was looking at clause 3.

10,311. It is in clause 3, sub-section 2 ?—The intention is, and I thought I had expressed it, that the tenant should maintain everything in at least as good a state as he finds it, but that if he improved it, he should be compensated, and if not, he should be penalised.

Lifeholders.

10,312. I quite understand that there is some little clerical error there. In clause 15, I see that among leaseholders you include people who are really freeholders, because they are people who hold for a life or lives—is that intended ?—I am afraid I am not a legal expert. This clause is copied bodily from the other Bill.

10,313. But still you are dealing with typical matters ?—If I find I am doing more than I intended to do, I will try and remedy it.

10,314. You will understand I am not criticising so much as just trying to get out the intention underlying it. Did you intend to go from the leaseholder, commonly so-called and commonly so thought about, to such people as freeholders who hold for a life or lives?—No, that was not my intention.

10,315. May we take it then that this clause going for these estates held for a life or lives might be subject to modification in that direction?—Yes.

Common grazings and sheep-walks.

10,316. As at present it stands, I point out to you that it includes certainly freeholds and lifeholds with power of renewal, or with what gives them the power of renewal or the equivalent to the power of renewal. In clause 16 I see there is one thing I wanted to ask you about, it says: "The tenants in any parish or "parishes who share in the same common grazing sheep-" walk or mountain pasture, may at a public meeting "called by public notice, appoint a committee of such "number as the meeting shall think fit, not being less "than three nor more than five." Those things are generally regulated either by the custom of the country or by the rules of law, or by the byelaws that are made by the people at the local manorial courts. Are all those intended to be abrogated or to go on side by side?—No; this I think would perhaps supersede those. It has been pointed out to me that in Cumberland and Westmorland and in North Lancashire the lack of some such power has caused a difficult situation.

10,317. No doubt?—Because they have the right of a certain number of sheep walks on a certain hill country, and of course, in a season like the last, if one man chooses to exercise his right to the full, it is detrimental not only to his own flock but to the others as well.

10,318. Quite so. I understand that there may be a small occasional case, but I was only pointing out that you were upsetting a large number of institutions and not remedying the difficulty?—I thought it would simplify and unify the institution; I did not know whether I was disturbing a better relation; if I was, I am sorry for it.

10,319. I did not presume to say it was better; I only pointed it out. I see you talk of sheep-walks and mountain pastures—those are in Wales. Is it not the fact that in the north of Wales, I think, as a matter of habit and usage perhaps continued for many generations, they do not use all the sheep-walks in common, but each farm has one piece allotted to it—it goes with the farm?—I think in later years also in Westmorland and Cumberland there has been a division of this mountain space.

10,320. I did not ask of late years; I asked about the ancient practice in Wales?—I am not so conversant with Wales as I am with the wants of the districts in my own neighbourhood.

10,321. But you propose to legislate about it?—Not for Wales.

10,322. But it includes those sort of cases you mentioned in Cumberland where the sheep-walks have been allotted to different farms?—No.

10,323. If they are divided it does not come under this at all; even if they are divided only by common consent and practice?—I think they are divided by a fence.

10,324. I think not as a rule, because the land is not worth the expense of a fence?—I do not see how they can be divided then, because the stock must pass from one part to another.

10,325. They are divided by a boy keeping the sheep from going to a particular part?—I never heard of that in my part of the world.

10,326. If you go to Wales you will see it?—Yes, but I would not like the boy's job.

10,327. However, the Bill does not apply to Wales?—This is exactly word for word what the Welsh people have incorporated.

10,328. Exactly; that is what I was trying to drive at—that you have taken a thing that applies to one part of the country, and you want to introduce that as legislation for another?—I may say that although that is a fact, I have had many letters from North Lancashire, Cumberland, and Westmorland, thanking me for having put this into the Bill. My own doubt was whether to put clause 16 in the Bill or not.

Object of Land Tenure Bill.

10,329. (*Mr. Channing.*) What you really care about in this Bill are, the principles of the Bill, I understand?—That is so.

10,330. You look on this Bill as a matter for very serious discussion?—Certainly.

10,331. And possibly for considerable amendment, in case of a discussion?—Certainly.

10,332. Now the main object of the Bill is to satisfy the wishes of people who think that by this machinery they will obtain the highest cultivation of the land, and also the best protection for the remaining capital of the tenant farmers?—That is quite so; exactly.

10,333. What the tenant farmers in Lancashire, who came to the Agricultural Conference, stated was, if I remember right, that they did not wish to wait till their capital had been wasted away by a bad land tenure system in the same way that the capital of the tenant farmers of Essex and elsewhere had been wasted?—That is so. I was very much impressed by the report of the Committee which was sent into Essex just prior to that date in which they found that timely remissions of rent had been refused to the man there, but that after his capital had become exhausted, and he was compelled to go, then the landlord did accept the rent from his successor which he would not take from him. I have had friends of my own go to Essex who have lost every penny that they went with and then when their funds were exhausted, and they were compelled to leave the farm, the landlord would do anything to keep them on the farm when it was too late.

10,334. The impression was largely spread among your Lancashire friends that the present system of land tenure led to the tenants paying capital in rent, and on their improvements, and so gradually wearing them down?—Yes, and we believed that, to a greater or less extent, what is now the result in Essex would follow all over the rest of the country if some legislation of the kind is not adopted.

10,335. I understand that the Lancashire Associations you represent made representations to the Central Chamber of Agriculture, and that the Agricultural Conference in December, 1892, was consequently organised by the Central Chamber?—I believe that was so.

10,336. That was so?—The idea of the conference came from this body.

The three "F's."

10,337. A resolution was moved, I believe, at that conference in favour of the general view of compensation for all improvements, and the abolition of the law of distress, and so on, and you moved an amendment to it, I think, in favour of the system of the three "F's"?—Yes, that was so.

10,338. A vote was taken, I believe, on those questions?—Yes. I was in a difficult position, inasmuch as the resolution to which I had to move mine as an amendment was certainly a fairly sweeping resolution, but I thought there was a very strong sympathy with the views I then propounded in that body.

10,339. As a matter of fact, a very large proportion of this conference was gathered together by the Central Chamber of Agriculture, and not by your Association?—Yes.

10,340. Did they vote for your views?—Yes. There was a strong vote, and there was a very strong feeling in favour of our proposals.

10,341. (*Chairman.*) What was the proportion?—I do not know whether any record was taken of it or not, but it was a minority; I do not suppose that more than perhaps a third of the meeting were in favour of my proposals.

10,342. (*Mr. Channing.*) You would put it at about a third?—Roughly I should say about a third of the meeting.

10,343. That corresponds with my own impression. You think that fixity of tenure and free sale give the best security for improvements and the greatest stimulus to the carrying out of improvements in your judgment?—I do.

Free sale of improvements.

10,344. I suppose you think that free sale is also just to the landlord with this right of pre-emption?—I think so, and I think it is the truest means of arriving at the value.

10,345. I want to clear up one point; towards the close of a five years' tenancy do you give option to the tenant to go out under free sale, or to come against the landlord under the Agricultural Holdings Act, or do you place the tenant in this position, that if any offer is made for his improvements outside, the landlord shall be able to say, You are bound to accept this offer,

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and do not come against me under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—If the farmer himself has negotiated an arrangement with someone who wishes to succeed him, then I take it that he has elected to pursue a certain course, and that he must take the consequences of it, even if that amounts to a revision of the amount by the court.

10,346. I am supposing a falling state of prices in agriculture, and I put it to you that it is not unlikely that an insufficient sum would be offered for the improvements of the tenant; is he bound to accept a sum which he considers below the value of the improvements, or has he the option under your Bill, or under your proposals, of going against the landlord?—Yes, that is so. I misunderstood you before. If he has chosen to act under the new powers of the Bill and sold his improvements, then he must abide by that, but he is not bound to accept any such offer from a succeeding tenant. He may elect to go out of the holding under the present Act, with the additions which are made to it by this Bill, and with that extension of its power.

10,347. Therefore you contemplate that free sale will not always be the most satisfactory method of going out for the tenant?—My own opinion would be that it would be a very rare exception where he did not avail himself of the free sale. I think that would be the system adopted in practice.

10,348. Where there is competition for farms, clearly it would be for the advantage of the tenant?—Yes.

10,349. Where there is none, and a falling market, would it not be to his disadvantage?—In such cases as the state of Essex, if you had not the power of falling back upon the existing Act, it might be to his disadvantage.

10,350. Do you think free sale might tend to keep men on the farms by their having an interest in their improvements to sell?—What I am most anxious about is that the man should feel by one means or another absolutely certain that he will be able at any time to realise the increased value of the land which he has created.

Fair rent.

10,351. In your view fair rent as I understand is to a certain extent to limit competition or rather to prevent the bad results of over-competition in rents?—Yes.

10,352. Mr. Everett questioned you upon that point, and said that many landlords used their common sense in deciding that matter; you wish to make the law a universal assertion of common sense on the subject?—Yes, I think it would be in the general interest that a man should not undertake to pay a rent which the existing conditions on the farm would not enable him to pay.

10,353. I think in some of the Lancashire evidence the opinion is expressed that rent should be based rather on the price of produce?—I may say I had myself, prior to the end of 1892, a very strong leaning towards a sliding scale for rents. For some time I had held that idea and I advocated it publicly, but when I came into close contact with it I found the difficulties were very great, and I had reluctantly to abandon that idea.

10,354. How do you fix a fair rent? Would you not fix a fair rent at the total probable value of the agricultural products, according to current prices of the holding, deducting the expenses of production and what you call the reasonable profits of the tenant?—Yes, the assessors would go over the farm with their practical knowledge. The farm is in Cheshire; say for instance it is a dairy farm. The assessors would estimate that they keep a herd of so many cattle on this—so many milk cattle—and they would be able to work it out roughly in that way what the farm was worth.

10,355. They would have to regard as determining the rent the value of the produce plus the quantities of the produce?—The difficulty with the sliding scale of prices would be that you would first of all have to make a table of all the various commodities, sheep, butter, everything of that kind, and the difficulty would be to know which to apply to the particular farm or which proportion of which to apply to the particular farm. You see you might fix the rent upon the basis of its being a sheep farm or of its being a mixed farm, and in the course of husbandry it might be changed and a different class of stock kept upon it.

10,356. It is a difficult matter and you will prefer to leave it to experts locally?—Yes.

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10,357. Another point: you referred to Sir James Caird; are you familar with the passage in his book on the landed interest in which he said that "The relations "of landlord and tenant in these days of competition "with foreign farming could no longer remain "relations of mere mutual confidence but must become "relations of business"?—Yes I have read that.

Fixity of tenure.

10,358. You are aware probably that he at once went on to argue in favour of fixity of tenure in the form of the system of long leases which is familiar in Scotland?—Yes.

10,359. He thought of giving it in that way?—That was under a different condition of things, before we had had this, shall I say, upsetting of all our previous calculations of prices. He would not repeat it now, I take it, under the existing circumstances. I take it that the whole position of the farmers in this country is revolutionised practically by the competition now which was not dreamt of in the past when the present conditions were laid down.

10,360. You wish to accept his principle and his argument there, but to substitute a different kind of fixity of tenure?—Yes, to apply it in a different way owing to the change of circumstances.

10,361. But at the same time I notice that you admit that a period of five years may be too long?—If we are to have the very rapid changes we have had during the past few years it might be too long, but you must strike a mean because there is the disadvantage on the other hand of having too frequent recourse to the courts, which I think would be very serious. You do not want the farmer's mind constantly filled with litigation and all that is attendant upon it. I want his energy to be devoted to his proper work of farming.

Compensation for improvements and fixity of tenure.

10,362. The point I want to lead you up to is a passage quoted in Mr. Wilson Fox's report giving the opinion of Mr. Kay and Mr. Barlow, who say that if absolute security were given by Act of Parliament for compensation for unexhausted improvements without expense and litigation, fixity of tenure would be a thing unasked for. Now, the question I want to ask you on that is this: having regard to the fact that you yourself recognise the five years as a difficult period to work, whether you do not think the position of the tenant would be equally good if he had full compensation for all improvements and freedom to make improvements subject to their being of agricultural value, and also an additional compensation for good will, or any loss that he might have in moving; and whether that would not cover the case?—It would depend on how it was drawn. I remember at our first meeting in Cheshire, Mr. Middlehurst, one of the gentlemen I named as having a very great grievance now, was in a minority of one at that meeting. He took a different view, but since then he has been evicted under these peculiar circumstances, and he has changed his view in consequence. It would depend upon what the compensation for disturbance was. It should be a heavy penalty and deterrent from such.

10,363. But if a tenant was in a position by ordinary notice to obtain not only the full value of his improvements, but also to obtain compensation for any loss he suffered—business loss and other losses which he suffered in removing from one farm to another—do not you think his position would be nearly as strong as under your Bill?—The compensation would have to be of such a nature as to make the landowners extremely reluctant to use it.

10,364. You are aware perhaps that in this Bill just now before the House of Commons—the Parish Councils Bill in its final form—the tenant who is to leave receives cash down, full compensation for depreciation and loss in the working of his business?—I have not seen the Bill as it has finally taken shape, it has been bandied backwards and forwards so much.

10,365. If a principle like that were applied to ordinary cases of farming, that the farmer should have cash down, compensation for the business loss, as well as other losses, would that not meet your case?—I would not say yes to that.

10,366. What I ask you is this: if you had full compensation given to the tenant for his business loss and loss for moving, whether that would not operate nearly as well as your fixity of tenure, that is the really substantial question?—It might be drawn very drastically; I should take a good deal of convincing of it. But, if you are referring to the rival proposals of

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Messrs. Kay and Barlow those proposals do not contain any provisions as regards fair rent at all.

Freedom of cultivation.

10,367. I am not referring to any specific proposals. You have attached a great deal of importance to freedom of cultivation?—I have; that is to say getting away from all the old antiquated clauses.

10,368. I suppose one of your arguments for your Bill is that real freedom of cultivation cannot be securely and definitely given to a tenant except through this principle of fair rents, fixture of tenure, and so on?—Yes, with a right to sell his improvements.

Land Courts.

10,369. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) After all your extensive experience of landlords and tenants throughout the country, I ask whether it is your opinion that the tenant farmers of England are not astute enough and that the landlords and their agents are so rapacious or so ignorant that they cannot agree between each other what is a fair rent, and therefore it is necessary to have a Land Court to settle the rent?—We must take things as we find them, and I find in a great many cases that those just conditions do not exist. It may be either for want of will or for want of power in some cases. You have the case of entailed estates and life interests, you have the case of estates in Chancery, and the case of estates that are very heavily mortgaged.

10,370. It is your opinion then that the Land Court is wanted to settle the rents between landlords and tenants?—Yes, I believe so.

The three "F's."

10,371. (*Chairman.*) You said just now that at a meeting of the National Agricultural Conference when you moved your amendment in favour of the three F's, about one third of the meeting held up their hands in favour?—It is a rough estimate; it is some time back now, it might not be quite so many.

10,372. I see in the official report of the proceedings it was stated that your amendment was rejected by an overwhelming majority?—That is an elastic term.

10,373. You think that is hardly a fair description?—I should say it was not.

Leases.

10,374. In Lancashire were leases common before the last few years?—They were pretty general, I think.

10,375. Very general?—Yes.

10,376. For what length of time?—Usually seven to 14 years—very rarely more than 14 years.

10,377. But the tenant could leave at the end of seven years?—No; I am speaking of different cases. In some cases there would be leases of seven years, and in some of 14 years; I do not mean the option of making the leases.

10,378. I thought you said 7 or 14?—Yes, in different cases—in some cases seven years, and in other cases up to 14, but very rarely exceeding 14.

10,379. On your own property what were the leases?—We have not had our property in the market to let very long, because my father during his lifetime mostly kept all these farms in his own hands and farmed them himself, but one farm, I think, was on a lease for 10 years—that is the largest farm.

10,380. During the last few years tenants have been unwilling to take leases?—Yes, increasingly so.

10,381. Even leases for seven years?—Yes, they prefer to take them year by year.

10,382. They have been quite unwilling to take a lease for seven years?—They have had a preference for a year-to-year tenancy. I am speaking of the last two or three years.

Judicial leases.

10,383. Practically your proposal is to make judicial leases for five years continuously, that is to say, from five years to five years.

10,384. Would you think that tenants would be more willing at the present moment with falling rents to take a five years' lease than they have been to take a seven years' lease during the last few years?—There are farmers I know personally who I think universally prefer to have such leases, not exactly on account of the period being fixed, but on account of the other conditions that would accompany them—the freedom of cultivation, and the rent being a fair rent, and altogether their position they think is better.

10,385. But they would waive their objections to being bound for five years in favour of the consideration of the other privileges they would get?—It is practically a lease in perpetuity, I may say, with the revision of the rent at the end of five years.

10,386. Supposing a tenant, in coming into possession under this Bill, and having a judicial lease fixed, was to say that he could not pay the judicial rent, what would happen then; would he be bound to go on for that five years paying a rent which he said that he could not pay?—If he entered upon the tenancy, he would.

10,387. He enters upon the tenancy, and the next day he applies to the court for a rent; supposing the court fixes a rent which he says he cannot pay, is he to be compelled for the five years to pay that rent?—If he has entered upon the farms, certainly he must pay the rent which the court says is a fair rent.

10,388. Notwithstanding that he says at the time that he cannot pay it?—Certainly. We cannot allow a man to be judge in his own case. If he goes on the farm, he must pay the rent which is adjudged; if he does not like the rent, he should not take the farm.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. THOMAS PARKER called and examined.

Mr. T. Parker.

10,389. (*Chairman.*) You are a farmer of Churton Hall, near Chester?—Yes.

10,390. Are you a member of the Cheshire Farmers' Club?—That is so.

10,391. Are you here to represent their views?—Yes.

10,392. Are you a tenant farmer?—Yes, I have been

10,393. What is the size of your holding?—I farmed about 400 acres. The farm I occupied is about 300 acres. I have some other land.

10,394. How long have you held it?—I have been tenant since 1873.

10,395. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Are you in occupation now?—I have some other land, a farm of about 100 acres.

10,396. But you are not in occupation of a farm as a tenant farmer now?—I am still at Churton Hall, but I have given up possession of the land all but an outlet. I leave the house and the outlet on the 1st May next.

10,397. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Then do I understand that you cease to be a tenant farmer on the 1st May?—Not exactly, I have some other land, a little of my own, and some that I occupy under one or two small proprietors.

10,398. You had 300 acres as a tenant farmer up to the 1st May?—Yes a little more than 300, but this one holding is 300 acres.

10,399. (*Chairman.*) Did you hold under a lease or or from year to year?—From year to year.

Competition for farms.

10,400. Is there any difficulty in letting land in your district at the present moment?—There is no difficulty in letting farms which have been well managed. Competition is as keen as I have ever known it.

10,401. As keen as you have ever known?—Yes, as I have ever known it.

10,402. Are there plenty of men of capital ready to take the farms?—We cannot tell whether they have capital or not. There are plenty of men who are supposed to have capital who are prepared to take them. There are plenty of applicants.

10,403. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Did I understand you to say that competition for farms was as keen as ever?—For well-managed farms.

Reductions of rent.

10,404. (*Chairman.*) Has there been a general reduction of rent in your district?—Not a general reduction.

10,405. But on some holdings, on some farms?—On some estates.

10,406. On some estates or on some farms?—On some estates, on various estates, but not a general reduction.

10,407. On the best land has there been no reduction, should you put it in that way that there has been no reduction on the best land, only on the inferior land?—I should not put it in that way. I should hardly say "the best land" I should say the best-managed land, the best-farmed land. If I may be allowed I think I ought to state that perhaps Cheshire has suffered as little as any county throughout the kingdom from the depression.

The Cheshire farm produce consists chiefly of cheese and butter and so forth, and the values of those commodities have not fallen in the same ratio as other farm products.

Dairying. Fall in prices.

10,408. Would you say that cheese and butter have not fallen at all, or not in the same proportion?—They have fallen but not in the same proportion.

10,409. What should you say has been the fall in the price of cheese and butter as compared with 10 or 12 years gone?—I should not say there has been any fall in the price of butter at all, or to a very trifling extent, and the fall in the price of cheese has been not more than, I should say, 10 per cent.

10,410. Is there much milk sold from the district?—There is a good deal of milk sold where the farms are favourably situated for railway stations; but we are not well off for railways in Cheshire—very badly off in some parts.

10,411. Has there been much increase in the sale of milk of late years?—Not the last six or eight years I should think.

10,412. Not the last six or eight years?—It would increase considerably, I think, if there was better railway accommodation.

10,413. Looking at the past 12 or 14 years, has it increased?—It has increased.

10,414. Increased since?—Yes.

10,415. As regards the price of milk, has that been maintained?—I do not think there is much falling off. I have not been a milk seller, so cannot speak with much authority. I am very badly situated for railways. I am 5 miles or 5½ miles away from the nearest station.

Land tenure.

10,416. You come here mainly to speak upon the the question of land tenure?—That is so, as applying to Cheshire farming chiefly.

10,417. What is your opinion upon the subject?—I consider that the existing condition of land tenure is very unsatisfactory; that it encourages bad farming rather than good; that the farmer who improves his holding and spends money freely has not sufficient security or fixity of tenure.

10,418. Have leases been common in your district or no?—No, they are not common.

10,419. Generally the land is held from year to year?—Generally.

10,420. Are the tenants not willing to take leases?—Yes, I think the tenants would be willing; I do not know whether they would now; but it is a system that has been carried on on very few estates. I think I ought to make one exception, and it is a very remarkable exception—that is on the estate of Lord Tollemache.

"Lease Notes" on Lord Tollemache's estate.

10,421. On that estate have leases been given freely in that part?—The late Lord Tollemache introduced what are called lease notes some 20 years ago, I think. I am not a tenant of Lord Tollemache, but the fact is well known locally.

10,422. What are these lease notes?—They give the option to the tenants of remaining tenants of their holdings for 20 years. The tenant had also the option of giving six months or twelve months' notice to quit and terminating the tenancy.

10,423. It was not exactly a lease then; it was an arrangement favourable to the tenant, in the sense that he could remain for 18 years; but which he could break at any time by six months' notice?—That is so; they were drawn out by the late Lord Tollemache.

10,424. It gave the tenant power to go but the right to remain for 18 years if he liked?—That is so. It is either 18 or 21 years, but I believe it is 18 years.

10,425. At the rent paid at the time?—Yes.

10,426. The rent therefore could not be raised during the 18 years, but could be lowered by the tenant giving notice to quit?—The tenancy could be terminated.

10,427. The tenant could obtain a reduction by giving notice to quit?—I do not say that. He could terminate the tenancy; it would be optional with the landlord whether he could obtain a reduction of rent.

10,428. Exactly; but I mean that the tenant could obtain a reduction by giving notice to quit and threatening to leave; on the other hand, the landlord could not obtain a greater rent for 18 years?—He could not obtain a greater rent, but I should not go so far as to say that the tenant could obtain a reduction, because owing to these lease notes, which practically give fixity of tenure, the Peckforton Estate (that is Lord Tollemache's estate) is perhaps let at as high a rental to-day as any estate in the county—I do not say higher, but I should think as high as any large estate in the county.

10,429. It practically gives great security to the tenants?—Yes.

10,430. Has that example been followed by other landlords?—I believe not. I have heard of it in no other case.

10,431. Do you go to the length of saying that the present system of tenure accounts in any way for the depression of agriculture?—Yes I do. I think with greater security we should be encouraged to farm better and more highly, and that the only way to meet the depression is to farm highly.

Depression in Cheshire.

10,432. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) As a matter of fact I thought you said just now that competition for farms was as keen as ever in the county and that Cheshire had suffered less than any other district; how is that compatible with the existence of depression. Is it a fact that there is depression or not—is there a severe agricultural depression in your county?—It is not so severe in our county as in other counties.

10,433. (*Chairman.*) Can you say that a state of things where there is a demand for farms and where the prices of the produce of the land have not been largely reduced amounts to a depression of agriculture?—In the case of Lord Tollemache's estate which I have referred to, I believe that there are very few estates upon which the tenantry at the present time are more prosperous and more contented, because through the existence of these lease notes—which is in reality fixity of tenure—they keep the farms in first-class condition.

10,434. Are there other properties in the neighbourhood where the tenants are prosperous?—Yes, some estates are lower rented, and upon a considerable number of farms in Cheshire now—large farms too—there is not a yard of tillage land; they devote themselves wholly and entirely to dairy farming.

10,435. And there the depression has not been felt?—Not so severely—it has been felt to some extent.

10,436. Has that district suffered from the drought during the last year or no?—Yes, we had very short crops of hay particularly, and the farmers were compelled to use larger quantities of feeding stuffs—cotton cake in the summer time chiefly.

10,437. But I presume it did not suffer so much as the south of England did?—I do not travel very much. The drought was very extensive in Cheshire—very severe.

Fixity of tenure.

10,438. What is your opinion of the effect of the present system of tenure upon the district—what complaints have you to make of it?—I think that a great defect is that we have really no fixity of tenure, no security, and that we have to farm under a system which I may call a hand-to-mouth system.

10,439. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) No security for what—for improvements or for what—in what sense is the expression used?—I was coming to that by and bye perhaps. I consider that the security or rather the compensation due to a tenant under the Agricultural Holdings Act is calculated upon an unsound basis.

10,440. You mean he has not sufficient security, then, for improvements made on the farm?—That is so.

10,441. And it is in that sense that you complain of want of security?—Yes.

Land Courts.

10,442. (*Chairman.*) What are the special defects that you have to point out in the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I think the first step in the way of land law reform should be the establishment of some tribunal—I hardly like to use the term land court, it seems to have an objectionable sound, but call it what you like—some tribunal, an arbitration board—I look upon that as the first necessary step—to which either a landlord or a tenant can refer disputes for settlement as they arise between them; and the labourers too if there is any dispute between them and their employers.

10,443. Do you mean specially disputes between landlord and tenant on the tenant quitting the farm as to the value of the improvements?—Not necessarily on his quitting the farm, but that a sitting tenant may apply.

10,444. What questions would you refer to the tribunal?—I would refer the question of rent. I would also allow the tenant to apply to the Court—I do not know what I must call it; must I call it a Court?

10,445. You may call it what you like; it is your evidence not mine?—I would give the tenant the privilege of submitting his agreement to that Court and if it considered that that agreement contained clauses which were injurious and hurtful to him and to good farming generally, that those clauses should be eliminated.

10,446. Then this Court ought to have the revision of any terms of agreement between the landlord and tenant, not merely as to rent, but as to the conditions of the holding?—Yes.

Judicial rents.

10,447. For how long should the rent be fixed?—I think Mr. Smith has fixed upon seven years. I do not think that you could reduce that very much.

10,448. For seven years?—It would not do for the Court to be open for a tenant or a landlord to make an appeal every year.

10,449. You think it would be impracticable to refer to it every year?—I think so, certainly.

10,450. And in your opinion seven years is about the mean of what would be desirable?—I think that would be a fair period.

10,451. Then in fact it would amount to giving the tenant a judicial lease for seven years—is that so?—Yes, it would.

10,452. It would come to be a lease for seven years?—Yes.

10,453. At a rent to be determined by the Court or the tribunal?—If there was a dispute.

10,454. And at the end of the seven years is the tenant according to your view to be entitled to another tenancy of the same length and so on?—I hardly understand your question.

10,455. You have told us that the court or tribunal shall have the power of determining rent for seven years; what I want to know is whether, at the end of the seven years the tenant is to be entitled again to another lease of seven years?—I should say that the court ought to be open at the end of the seven years either to the landlord or to the tenant.

10,456. Or to the tenant?—If times revive that the landlord should have the power to appeal to the court to have the rent increased.

10,457. Am I to understand you that the tenant once in possession is to be entitled to remain in possession for ever, subject to revision every seven years?—That would want qualifying.

Eviction of tenants.

10,458. How would you qualify that? I only want to know what your view is?—If a landlord had reasons to know that his tenant was farming badly, he might have the power of appeal to the Court and have him evicted, provided he could prove that the farmer was neglecting his duties.

10,459. But subject to that qualification, then, you think that the tenant in possession should be entitled to remain there for ever, subject to a revision of his rent every seven years; is that your view?—That is rather a strong way of putting it.

10,460. I am only trying to arrive at what your view is?—What I would try to effect in land tenure is this: to prevent capricious evictions, give the tenant a fixity of tenure and security against that happening.

10,461. Does it not follow from that, that your view really is this: that a tenant in possession is to remain if he wishes in possession for ever, subject to the revision of rents every seven years?—Yes, of course, the Court being open to either party to appeal to it.

10,462. To appeal to it on the subject of rent?—Yes, or bad farming

10,463. But the landlord would be deprived of evicting the tenant altogether except with the permission of the Court?—That is so.

10,464. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Whatever the tenant had done?—No; I say the landlord should have power to evict the tenant for bad conduct, bad farming, at any time—not necessarily at the end of seven years—at any time.

10,465. With or without the consent of the Court?—With the consent of the Court.

10,466. Then, without the consent of the Court, he is not to have the power of evicting him for anything; is that so? I want to know whether that is your view. That is what I gather from what you said, but I want to make it clear as you seem to have some hesitation?—I should not say it was absolutely essential to appeal to a Court to terminate any tenancy.

10,467. It is not to be essential?—No, because the tenant and the landlord might come to an amicable arrangement to terminate the tenancy.

10,468. (*Chairman.*) But without the approval of both parties the tenancy could not be determined without appeal to the Court?—That is so.

10,469. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What I asked you was this. Whether we are to understand that without an appeal to the Court the landlord could not evict a tenant for anything?—I should make it optional to the tenant, if the landlord served a notice to quit, to terminate the tenancy?—A tenant, if he was guilty of bad conduct or bad farming, would go out without appealing to the Court.

10,470. Who is to decide, then?—I should let him decide for himself; at least, let him appeal to the Court if he wishes and let the Court decide.

10,471. I thought you said just now without appealing to the Court; your last answer to me was that if he was guilty of bad conduct you would let him go out without appealing to the Court?—I should give the tenant the option of appealing to the Court.

10,472. (*Chairman.*) In other words the tenant would not be evicted by the landlord even for misconduct or bad farming, except with the approval of the Court?—He would have the right of appeal.

10,473. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) That is the question I asked you just now, and asked you twice, and you appeared to hesitate a good deal, and that is why I wanted to know whether it is your opinion that without an appeal to the Court the tenant could not be evicted for anything, whatever he had done?—The appeal to the Court would be optional with the tenant if the landlord served him with notice. I think if the tenant was guilty of bad conduct he would not appeal to the Court.

10,474. (*Chairman.*) He would always have the right of appealing to the Court against his landlord's eviction?—Yes.

10,475. Except, I presume, for the nonpayment of rent?—Yes, that would be sufficient cause to terminate any tenancy.

10,476. For any breach of conduct in bad farming or any misconduct, if the tenant was not prepared to accept the notice to quit he would have the right of appealing to the Court?—Those are my views.

10,477. The Court therefore would always intervene between the landlord and tenant in such matters?—Yes.

10,478. Therefore subject to that the tenant would be entitled to remain in for ever?—Yes.

Transfer tenancy.

10,479. And I presume it would follow that the tenant if he did not desire to continue in his tenancy would have the right of handing it to somebody else,—of choosing his successor?—Yes.

10,480. Would you also give him the right of bequeathing his farm—willing it away?—Yes, I should give him that right; I should give him the right of bequeathing his improvements.

10,481. But the farm itself?—That is a very important matter to give an opinion upon. I am only a tenant farmer. I am not versed, and I do not profess to be versed, in the law, but it is the improvements which a tenant farmer has effected in his holding which we want him to have the power of bequeathing.

10,482. But you told us that the tenant is to have the right of remaining on the farm, at all events so long as he lives?—Yes.

10,483. And I thought you said that he should also have the right of handing over the farm to another person?—Yes, he should have the voice.

10,484. Then I go further, and ask whether he should also have the right of willing it away?—That is a matter I have not considered very fully.

10,485. You have not considered that point?—No.

10,486. At all events you go the length of confidently saying that he should have the right of assigning it?—I do.

10,487. Without the consent of his landlord?—Yes, without the consent of his landlord.

10,488. And in that way you would do away with what you call capricious eviction?—Yes.

Particulars of capricious eviction of witness.

10,489. Have there been cases of capricious eviction in your neighbourhood?—Yes, one—a very pertinent one, I think—my own.

10,490. You were evicted yourself?—I am being evicted.

10,491. When did that occur?—I have given up possession of the land, all but what is called the out-let in Cheshire and the buildings. I give up possession of that in May.

Specimen of unfair agreement.

10,492. What has been the result of your leaving your farm as regards the improvements which you effected upon it?—I mentioned the matter just now of having eliminated from agreements unfair clauses. I have got one here that I should like to read, if I may be permitted, in my own agreement, which deals with this question that you are now raising. This is written specially for my disadvantage, I suppose, or advantage. It occurs, I believe, in no other agreement upon the estate. It is written, not printed.

10,493. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Can we have the date of it?—This was signed on the 26th July 1884.

10,494. (*Chairman.*) Is that a lease or a yearly tenancy?—Yearly tenancy. "It is agreed between "landlords and tenant, that the present annual value "of the holding to an incoming tenant is 570*l.*; but "inasmuch as the tenant has at his own expense made "certain improvements on the holding, he is to pay "only the reserved rent of 499*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*, and it is "expressly agreed and declared, that if the tenancy "shall continue for seven years from the second day "of February 1885, the tenant shall be considered to "have been thereby fully compensated for all improvements made by him upon the holding prior to the "date hereof, but this clause shall not be considered "as binding either landlords or tenant to a tenancy "for 7 years, or for any other term than from year to "year." *See reply by landlord*, Appendix A. XXVIII.

10,495. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Did you subscribe to that—sign it?—I did under pressure of notice to quit (notice to quit was served upon me in January previous), and under a threat of the land agent that if I did not like to sign it I had better leave the farm.

10,496. What is the full rent, and what is the reserved rent—570*l.*?—That is the full rent. Shall I explain, please?

10,497. Yes?—I have told you before, that this farm consists of 300 acres; that is not quite correct, because there are 16 acres of that which belong to the mother of my landlord. I have included it in the same holding—it is really immaterial, but I want to be correct. 16 acres of it are meadows that I occupy under my landlord's mother, so that this agreement refers to 284 acres. At the time that this agreement was signed it was 285 acres, but a small plot of land was taken from me, so those are the real facts now.

10,498. (*Chairman.*) The full rent was 570*l.*?—That is the full value.

10,499. And what was the actual rent that you were to pay for seven years?—499*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*

10,500. A difference therefore of about 71*l.*?—Yes, 70*l.* and half-a-crown.

10,501. (*Mr. Everett.*) And that was a consideration for improvements you had effected?—Yes.

Improvements effected on witness's farm.

10,502. (*Chairman.*) What improvements had you effected?—I succeeded my father in this tenancy; he had had this farm since 1848, and during the tenancy my father and myself have effected great improvements, and spent a lot of money.

10,503. What kind of improvements?—We had eradicated over 6,000 yards of old fences, and planted 2,600 yards or more of new ones, filled up several old pits; then my father had erected three or four buildings or portions of buildings, improved the roads considerably, and done a lot of paving.

10,504. What kind of buildings—barns?—He put a new corn room over a large cart-house at his own expense entirely, and he built an implement shed at his own expense.

10,505. (*Viscount Cobham.*) In brick?—Stone, and the roof was thatched; it adjoined a building that was thatched.

10,506. (*Chairman.*) I suppose these improvements were effected over a term of years from 1848?—Yes.

10,507. What was the rent paid before 1884, at the time when this agreement was entered into?—It was, I believe, 429*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*, but I am not provided with my receipts.

10,508. Had that been the rent for a good many years—since 1848?—It had not been the rent for a good many years, because at my father's death his property was sold. My landlords, who were trustees at that time, purchased some of the land, and it was added to my holding, so of course the rent was altered. My rent previous to the signing of this was 429*l.* and some shillings.

10,509. From the death of your father?—No, not from the death of my father quite; we kept his property in hand for one year.

10,510. Nearly from that time?—Yes.

10,511. When did your father die?—He died in 1873.

10,512. Then from 1874 to 1884 you were paying 429*l.* a year?—That is about it.

10,513. I suppose that was rather a low rent?—It was worth the money at that time.

10,514. (*Mr. Channing.*) When was it fixed at 429*l.*?—I succeeded my father.

10,515. Had it been at that rate for a long time previous?—Yes, with the exception that there had been some land added to the tenancy. Of course, with that addition the rent was increased, but I had been paying 429*l.* before the signing of this agreement for, I dare say, 10 years.

10,516. (*Chairman.*) That you say was a low rent?—I say, consequent upon our improvements, the farm was worth the money.

10,517. Then in 1884 it was valued at 570*l.*?—Yes.

10,518. And you were to pay 499*l.* for seven years?—Yes.

10,519. That reduction—as compared with its full value—of 71*l.* a year being in consideration of your improvements?—That was so.

10,520. Seventy-one pounds for seven years would be about equivalent to the 499*l.*?—Yes.

10,521. Were the improvements valued at that at the time?—No.

10,522. Was there any valuation made of the improvements at that time?—None at all, only this reference made in this clause.

10,523. Then the clause, although it fixes the rent at 499*l.* for the seven years, also contains a provision that neither party should be bound by that for seven years?—That is so.

10,524. Then did you remain in possession till the conclusion of that seven years?—Yes.

10,525. When did the tenancy terminate practically?—It is now terminating, as I may say; I gave up the land on the 2nd February, all but an outlet which I shall have to give up on the 1st May—that is the custom of Cheshire—and the house and buildings.

10,526. Did you pay the full rent for some time—for a year or two?—I paid 570*l.*—this will want careful notice, please—I have paid this 570*l.*, or at least the half of it upon two occasions.

10,527. (*Mr. Little.*) Five hundred and seventy pounds or 499*l.*?—I will ask you to accept it as 570*l.* in round figures. I have told you that there was an acre of land taken from me, and 30*s.* was taken off for that. On two half-yearly audits after this agreement came into force I paid the half of the rent. I actually paid 284*l.* 5*s.* 0*d.*—that is the sum, because 30*s.* a year was knocked off for this plot of land that was taken from me, and that is 15*s.* half yearly.

Compensation for improvements on witness's farm.

10,528. (*Chairman.*) Then when the tenancy came to an end you did not obtain compensation for the value of those improvements?—No. I will call your attention to this fact, that upon looking carefully through this clause and after obtaining advice upon it, at the third half-year's audit I withheld what I considered that I had overpaid the two previous half years; in other words, I paid my half-year's rent less 30*l.* 13*s.* 9*d.*, each for the two half years, that was 61*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

10,529. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Because you considered you had been paying in excess in accordance with your agreement?—Yes, I had actually paid this amount; but on looking carefully through it, and upon the advice of my friends, not legal advice, I was told that, although this clause dealt with the value of the farm, and dealt with the question of compensation, it did not really say that they could exact that full value.

10,530. (*Chairman.*) Then you get the benefit of that clause for one year beyond the period which was fixed? —Two years.

10,531. Then you got the lower rent for nine years instead of seven years?—Yes.

10,532. Then what is your grievance under it?—My grievance under it is, that I have been deprived through the existence of this clause from claiming compensation which otherwise I ought to have been entitled to—that I signed this clause under pressure of that notice to quit—and that I was not a free agent in the matter. Of two evils I tried to choose the least, but I have been bound by it for all that.

10,533. Are we to take it, that the fact that you and perhaps your father before were paying a somewhat less rent for some years, and that for nine years you paid about 71*l.* less than the agreed value, was not compensation enough to you and to your father for the improvements you had effected?—No, nothing like it.

10,534. Nothing like it?—Not what I consider I was entitled to. Excuse me, I hardly like the term "low rent" that you apply to it. If we had not effected the improvements it would not have been a low rent—it would have been a high rent.

10,535. It would have been a high rent if you had made no improvements?—Yes.

10,536. (*Mr. Little.*) Were the improvements that you think you ought to be compensated for on quitting those which were made before this agreement, or were any of them made subsequently?—And subsequently.

10,537. (*Chairman.*) Then your real complaint is, that in 1884 under the notice to quit you were induced to enter upon an agreement under which you did not get full compensation in the shape of a reduction of rent for the improvements which you had effected?—That is my contention. I consider that I was equitably entitled to the increased letting value of the holding affected and caused through our outlay and improvements capitalized.

Value of improvements effected on witness's farm.

10,538. What did you value your improvements at then?—The farm has been let I believe at a higher rental, and I think that I should have been at least entitled to the difference between 499*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* and 570*l.* capitalized—I do not know upon what scale—I have not given that consideration.

10,539. I want to get the measure of your grievance. What in 1884 was the value of the improvements for which you considered you were entitled to the compensation of a lower rent?—I consider that this farm, had it not been for our improvements would have been worth no more than 429*l.* a year, because there is land at the present time adjoining belonging to the same estate, upon which improvements have not been effected by the tenant, that is not worth 1*l.* an acre to-day.

10,540. Did you put any actual capital value upon the improvements that you had effected?—No, no actual value.

10,541. Of course it is difficult for us to form an opinion of the measure of your grievance without knowing what was the value of the improvements which you had actually effected at that time?—Yes, it is difficult for you, only I try to assist you by telling you what improvements I have done. They have been done by the tenants.

10,542. Of course that gives us a very small guide as to what the actual cost of those improvements was?—I should think that the buildings that my father erected, and the pavements that he put down, and the improvement of the road would cost him perhaps 300*l.* at a rough calculation. There was the drainage. We drained 166 acres of it, the landlords finding pipes only. The whole of the expense of eradicating the fences was borne by the tenant, and all the raising of the new ones with the exception that the landlords paid for the quicksets and found timber in the rough to protect the young quicksets adjoining the grazing land. That is all the outlay the landlord ever subscribed towards it.

10,543. What do you put the whole at then?—That does not comprise nearly the whole of the improvements. I have invested very heavily in bones myself and feeding stuffs for cattle. I have fed a lot of fat stock.

Compensation under Agricultural Holdings Act.

10,544. But would you not, under the Agricultural Holdings Act, get compensation for those on the termination of your tenancy if there was any value remaining?—Yes, that is so; but there is a clause in this agreement that acted very detrimentally to me.

10,545. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What clause is that?—Dealing with produce—sold off. My claim for compensation amounted to 290*l.*, I think, on the conclusion of my tenancy; that is all I was advised to claim for. The existence of this clause deprived me from making any larger claim.

10,546. You put in a claim for 290*l.* under the Agricultural Holdings Act, do I understand?—Yes.

10,547. And then?—I could not put in any claim for any of those buildings erected, nor any of the roads. The only claim that I had which held good, coming under that clause which necessitates having the written consent, was the planting of a new orchard. That I did obtain compensation for, but under this clause I was prevented making any claim for those buildings. I had also done, subsequent to the signing of this agreement, a lot of draining myself—I daresay 20 acres—and I had also eradicated more fences. I had done it in the hope that I should continue tenant and enjoy the benefits, but through not having the written consent I could make no claim.

10,548. (*Chairman.*) Those were permanent improvements effected, I presume, before the Agricultural Holdings Act was passed?—Yes.

10,549. And effected without the consent of the landlord?—Most of those dealt with in this clause were effected before the Agricultural Holdings Act was passed.

10,550. And without the consent of the landlord?—Without the written consent.

10,551. In respect of the buildings and so forth, they had, I presume—although your agreement, as I understand you, was made rather under duress—been professedly dealt with under the agreement of 1884?—Yes.

10,552. Therefore you could not claim for them a second time?—No.

10,553. Therefore your claim, on quitting your holding, was practically confined to any claim which you might have under the Agricultural Holdings Act? —The fact is I never could claim at all. I was actually compensated for those improvements by having my rent raised. That is what this clause actually amounts to.

10,554. You mean the clause in 1884?—Yes.

10,555. That, of course, is your point of view, that it was over-valued in 1884, and that the immediate reduction of rent, as compared with the valuation, was not sufficient to compensate you for the whole of the improvements?—Yes; and it goes to support my contention that we want some tribunal to which we can refer disputes as they arise. If there had been such a tribunal existing at that time I should certainly have referred this clause, and appealed to them on this question.

10,556. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Was the rent raised before the agreement of 1884?—No.

10,557. Or has it been raised since?—When the agreement came into force, February 2nd, 1885.

10,558. Before you signed the agreement the rent was agreed to?—That was part of the agreement.

10,559. (*Mr. Little.*) Made subsequent to the passing of the Act?—The agreement was signed in July 1884.

10,560. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) And the rent having been raised, you accepted it and signed the agreement?—Under the pressure of a notice to quit, and the threat that if I did not like to sign it I must leave the farm.

10,561. (*Chairman.*) I suppose at that time the then Agricultural Holdings Act gave you no protection at all, and no claim for the improvements you had effected?—No; not at all.

10,562. Therefore you may say that at the time you signed this agreement in 1884, you had no legal claim whatever to reimbursement for the improvements you had effected?—No.

10,563. That being your position, you were unable to resist a demand for rent which you thought otherwise excessive having regard to your improvements?—I thought it unjust.

10,564. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What agreement did you hold under before, or did you hold under none?—None at all.

10,565. No agreement?—None previous to this.

10,566. Why did you enter upon such an arrangement?—I was accepted as tenant in succession to my father upon the same terms. He farmed under no agreement.

10,567. (*Mr. Little.*) Could you not have claimed in 1884, under the Act of 1875, for improvements executed within 10 years before?—If I had made a claim I should have been turned out.

10,568. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Was the Act of 1875 contracted out of?—It was.

Rent of witness's farm.

10,569. (*Mr. Everett.*) Do you know what rent the farm is let at now—what rent the new tenant is going to pay?—It has been let to a market gardener, and I have heard three reports; one is authoritative, because it came from the agent, not to me direct, but indirect, that it had been let at this value, this 570*l.*, but that may be the whole truth, or only part of it. I have heard two other reports, one to the effect that it has been let at 50*s.* an acre, and the other that it has been let at 45*s.*

10,570. Both of those would be more than your amount?—Yes, this valuation is practically 2*l.* an acre.

10,571. (*Chairman.*) You have no certain information on the subject?—I have certain information that it has been let at this rent, but that may mean this rent and more.

10,572. At the rent of 570*l.*?—Yes.

10,573. Namely, the rent which you would have been compelled to pay if the landlord had continued you on as the tenant?—Yes, they would have enforced it when they found out that I had discovered this flaw in it, and have made me pay that 570*l.*

10,574. At all events you had the advantage of two years at the lower rent owing to a technicality rather; is that not so?—I had the advantage of not having my rent raised a second time on my own improvements for two years extended.

10,575. However, in the main, I think you will agree with me that your complaint is of having been put at a disadvantage in the year 1884 by the then state of the law?—By the enforcement of this agreement—by the introduction of this agreement.

10,576. That agreement was forced upon you in 1884?—Yes.

10,577. And you were unable to resist it because the Agricultural Holdings Act at that time did not give you any support?—That is so, because the landlord had contracted out of it.

10,578. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Could you not get compensation if you quitted the farm?—No.

10,579. Not under the custom of the country?—No, not a farthing.

10,580. (*Chairman.*) You relied upon the general faith of the landlord, I suppose?—That is it.

10,581. And came to no agreement with him?—That is it.

10,582. What other matters have you got to bring before the Commission?—I have touched upon the point that the tenant cannot have eliminated from his agreement clauses that can be distinctly shown to be hurtful and obstructive to good farming; there is nothing to prevent the landlord raising his rents upon the tenant's own improvements without compensating him for such.

Valuation under Agricultural Holdings Act.

10,583. Without going into the question of the fixity of tenure or judicial rents, have you any suggestions to make as to better compensation to tenants under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes, I maintain that the system of compensation is unsound.

10,584. What alteration would you suggest?—It is calculated now upon outlay—solely upon outlay and not upon results.

10,585. (*Mr. Channing.*) You mean by the practice of the valuers, do you not, not by the Act itself?—If you claim compensation for feeding stuffs you have to produce your vouchers. I will deal with my own case; of course I am more conversant with that than any other. I have been in the habit of growing about 1,000 or 1,200 bushels of oats annually, and I have always consumed those until this year. I get no compensation at all because I have no vouchers. I am dealing with the system of claiming compensation.

10,586. Then you think the Agricultural Holdings Act ought to be amended so as to give compensation for any food used for feeding which is grown upon the farm itself?—Certainly.

10,587. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is that in addition to the improved letting value—I do not quite understand you?—No.

10,588. Do you wish the improved letting value to be taken into consideration?—The improved letting value is not taken into consideration by the Act. It is not acknowledged.

10,589. Do you want it to be?—I want it to be.

10,590. Do you want, in addition to that, the cost?—No, if we could get the improved letting value that would be all I contend for.

10,591. You would be satisfied with that alone?—I say the system of compensation under the Agricultural Holdings Act is unsound—that is what I contend. It deals with outlay not with effect; it does not allow a tenant any compensation for his own efforts, his own skill or his own labour.

Competition for farms.

10,592. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You say there is plenty of competition for farms in Cheshire; what class of men are the applicants mainly?—They are nearly all dairy farmers.

10,593. The sons of existing farmers?—Yes.

10,594. That is to say, notwithstanding the sense of insecurity in Cheshire the farmers are quite ready to send their sons into the business?—That is so; you see they have very little choice. The families increase and of course the number of farms does not increase.

10,595. Should you be satisfied if the Tollemache lease was of general application?—I would be perfectly satisfied.

10,596. Do you think that would cover the whole grievance?—That has been working most satisfactorily since its introduction.

Land Courts.

10,597. If you could have that you would not care to have Land Courts?—I should be perfectly satisfied because it would be so great an improvement over the existing state of things. I think a Land Court would be preferable too—I think a Land Court should be established as the first step in the direction of land law reform.

Railway accommodation in Cheshire.

10,598. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I think you said that you suffered very much from want of railway accommodation—I do not know what part of Cheshire you come from, but my experience of Cheshire is that it is very much riddled with railways?—I live in perhaps as unfavourable position as any farmer in the county. I am 5½ miles from the nearest station.

10,599. From any station?—Yes.

10,600. How far from Chester?—About seven miles and a half from the station.

10,601. May I ask whether in your father's tenure or during your own tenure the estate on which your farm was was in the hands of trustees or of the possessor himself?—It was in the hands of trustees for a considerable number of years. The present owner only came of age and attained his majority in December 1891, and for nearly 20 years previous to that time it had been in the hands of trustees.

10,602. I suppose you would agree with me that in such a county as Cheshire, which is principally a dairy county, the cheap corn and cheaper cake have helped the dairy farmer?—Yes, considerably.

Selection of incoming tenant.

10,603. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) In the summary of your evidence you say that an outgoing tenant should have a voice in the selection of his successor. Would you tell the Commission why you say that?—I believe that if he had a voice in the selection of his successor he would have a better chance of making a fair arrangement. You have asked me for my opinion, I must give it you. I do not believe it is right or reasonable that any person should possess the enormous power which is at present possessed by some individuals to either accept or refuse any tenant who may be objectionable in some form, perhaps politically or religiously, or in some other form; in other words, I do not think it is right that any human being should have the power of populating the whole district, the country side, with one sect or one religion, or one party.

10,604. How far would you let the voice extend—to the absolute dictation of his successor?—I think if a tenancy was being concluded and brought to a termination, and the outgoing tenant wanted to agree with the successor, providing he discovered a respectable man, possessing the necessary capital to stock and farm the holding, and possessing the necessary qualifications of practical knowledge and so forth, that he should be accepted as tenant.

Dairying. Fall in prices.

10,605. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You told us that you did not think butter had fallen much in price, if at all, and that cheese had fallen, you thought about 10 per cent. What dates do you use in making this comparison of prices—since what time?—The Chairman I think applied that term 10 or 12 years ago.

10,606. So that as compared with ten years ago, butter has not fallen in price, and cheese has fallen about 10 per cent.?—Butter has not fallen very much—very little in fact.

10,607. What prices do you get for butter and cheese now?—I believe butter is about 1*s.* 5*d.* per lb. or 1*s.* 6*d.*; that is about the general run during the last 10 or 15 winters I should think.

10,608. And cheese?—Cheese at present is selling very well. I came up part of the way on Tuesday or Wednesday morning with a cheese factor, and he told me that he had bought in a local fair new cheese, made this year, at 70*s.* a hundredweight of 121 lbs.

10,609. Then I understand you do not think that milk has fallen in price to any sensible extent, but that you are not so well acquainted with milk?—These things are not sold so well now throughout the whole year as they were 10 or 15 years ago, but they have not fallen to anything like the same proportion as grain and other farm produce.

Existence of depression. Fixity of tenure.

10,610. Then practically, as far as your experience goes, there is no depression in the agriculture with which you have to deal?—I would not say there is no depression, but there is less probably in Cheshire than in most other counties.

10,611. Then from what cause does the depression arise so far as it exists?—I think it arises chiefly through want of security.

10,612. And that is not a new cause—that is a cause that has been in existence, say, for the last 30 or 40 years?—Yes.

10,613. Was agriculture prosperous with you 10 or 20 years ago?—Yes, 20 years ago.

10,614. Then it cannot be the insecurity of tenure which makes it unprofitable now?—But under better and more thorough security we could farm more highly. I maintain that I have farmed highly, as the result of my tenancy and this agreement prove, but a good many tenants dare not spend money in consequence of the insecurity under which they live.

10,615. Your contention is that agriculture would be more prosperous with more security of tenure, but you cannot say that it is specially depressed at the present time from want of that security?—Not specially, but that is a great cause of the depression. I have told you that the depression does not exist so much in Cheshire as probably in most other counties, but that depression would be less acute and less widespread if we had proper security.

Capricious evictions.

10,616. Can you say that capricious evictions, and the tyranny of one man over extensive areas, have been of such a kind all over Cheshire as to cause depression in agriculture?—No. I give Cheshire landlords credit for fairer treatment generally.

10,617. What you mention then are isolated cases of oppression?—Yes.

Rent of witness's farm.

10,618. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Is the farm that you are leaving a fair sample as regards rent in that part of the country?—At the present time it is considered a high rent—that is this rent—this valuation.

10,619. You would have been quite willing to have remained on your farm evidently for any length of time at a rent?—Not at this increased rent.

10,620. You would have desired to have got a reduction of that?—I tried to do so.

Compensation for home-grown produce.

10,621. Then you said in reference to the compensation that you considered compensation ought to be given for produce grown and consumed upon the holding; in what practical way would you propose that that consumption should be vouched for—have you thought that matter out?—A good deal would have to depend upon the truthfulness of the tenant. I generally keep records myself of what crops I grow each year, and if a termination of the tenancy necessitated a claim for compensation to be sent in, I expect that the tenant's statement as to what he had produced would have to be accepted.

10,622. That is the only way that you can see that the landlord's interests would be at all protected—he must accept the word of the tenant as to what amount be had consumed upon his holding?—I believe on some estates—I am not speaking authoritatively—records are kept as to the different croppings of the land; that would give the landlord a knowledge as to what was grown.

Existence of depression.

10,623. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You told us more than once, I think, that, as far as Cheshire is concerned, the depression is less than in almost any other county; and in one case, I think, you said, speaking of one estate, nowhere else were the people engaged in agriculture more prosperous or more contented?—That is so.

10,624. Then, I suppose, it would hardly be said, as regards Cheshire, that there is any serious depression in that county?—I think I have made that clear before.

10,625. With regard to the insecurity of tenure, I understood you to tell me that you used the expression in the sense that there is not sufficient security for the improvements made by the tenants?—That is so.

10,626. And that there should be a tribunal to refer questions to, as to rents and as to agreements?—Yes.

Land Courts.

10,627. Now are not tenant farmers occupying the position that you do at present competent to make agreements for themselves?—Yes, they are competent—they may be competent.

10,628. Then what is the necessity of a tribunal?—The necessity is this: that they have not the power to enforce their views.

10,629. Is it your idea of a fair bargain that one party should always be in a position to enforce his views upon the other?—Those are exactly my views. When a tenant farmer has got a lot of money invested in his holding he has to sing very small and lie low occasionally.

Freedom of contract *v.* Land Courts.

10,630. I spoke of tenant farmers in your position at present; I understand that you individually have given up your farm, and are not now a tenant with a lot of capital invested. Now take your own case; if you wish to enter upon another farm, are you not perfectly competent to make a fair bargain for yourself?—Yes, I should have a better chance now.

10,631. Then it arises only in those cases where people are bound by unfortunate conditions which they have entered into before?—And in any case where the tenant has invested a lot of money in his holding.

10,632. Unless he has invested it under an agreement which gives him security?—Yes.

10,633. Now I observe very different opinions have been expressed upon this point by some of the farmers in Lancashire; I observe that the Liverpool Farmers' Club stated at a meeting at which one of the sub-commissioners of this Commission was present that they were in favour of freedom of contract. The Hambleton farmers said that all matters should be settled between landlord and tenant, and that if a man is not fit to make his own bargain he is not fit to farm. Do not you think there is a good deal of truth in those statements?—I do; but there is a good deal of truth wanting. It wants a good deal of explaining. In my own case I was a sitting tenant, and my capital was invested in the farm. That is quite a different matter from a person entering upon a tenancy.

10,634. I quite understand that in the case of a tenant farmer like yourself, in the position which you described to us previously, where you enter upon a farm without an agreement which gives you security, you may be placed in a very great difficulty; but do you think that that applies to the majority of farmers in England at the present moment?—I should not think it applies to the majority, because I do not think the majority of farmers are spending very much money.

10,635. You are speaking perhaps more of the farmers in your own district?—Yes. my remarks apply chiefly to Cheshire, but from what I hear from reports and from what I read, the tenant farmers are not spending very much money upon their farms in other parts of the country.

Land Courts.

10,636. Do you desire that the proposals which you have suggested to us should apply universally to all parts of England or only to cases such as you have described?—My remarks apply to Cheshire. I should suggest that there should be a separate tribunal for every county.

10,637. Now you have suggested that there should be this outside tribunal and that tenant farmers should have fixity of tenure and a tribunal to fix their rents: if you were provided with other means which would give you full and fair security for the improvements you have made upon your farm, would you not be satisfied then without insisting upon fixity of tenure and an outside tribunal to fix rents?—I cannot see any mode of obtaining them.

10,638. If a mode was shown you by which that effect would be produced would that meet your desires, or do you want something further for compensation for your improvements?—I should never be satisfied myself although I may have to be. I look upon that as the first and necessary step in the way of land law reform, that we should have a tribunal of some kind established—separate ones for each county—to which tenants or landlords may refer disputes, as they arise between them for settlement, and also that employers and employed may refer disputes as they arise between them for settlement.

10,639. Employers and employed?—Yes, labourers.

10,640. You are speaking of farm labourers?—Yes.

10,641. Do I understand you to mean then that the wages of farm labourers are to be fixed by an outside tribunal also?—If they feel the necessity for appealing. If they feel dissatisfied they should have the right of appeal.

10,642. What is the tribunal which is to carry out these very serious undertakings? It is to fix rent, I understand, to fix wages if necessary, and to give fixity of tenure to the tenant farmers. What is the tribunal you propose for that purpose?—It is generally understood as meaning a Land Court.

10,643. Yes, but I am not able to follow the general understanding. What is your understanding of a Land Court? What is to be the Land Court which is to carry out these undertakings?—I think there should be an equal number of officials appointed to act upon that Court selected from the tenant farmer class and from the landlord or land agent class. The labourers, too, should have their representatives, I do not say in an equal number, because if any dispute arises upon a question of labour it may not be of such magnitude and they would probably not desire so many representatives.

10,644. This Land Court then is to be composed of representatives of tenant farmers, of landlords——?—Landlords or land agents.

10,645. And of labourers?—Yes.

10,646. And you propose that they should fix the wages of labourers, the rents of the tenant farmers, and give fixity of tenure to the farmer?—I do not say that they should fix wages but that they should settle disputes upon labour, it may be upon wages.

10,647. If the dispute was upon wages—and you say it may be upon wages—are they to fix them?—That is what I thought.

Fity of
ture.

10,648. Now with regard to fixity of tenure. It appeared to me from what you stated that you saw some possible objections to the proposition you laid down which I understood to be this: that without the appeal to the Court a tenant was not to be evicted for any reason whatever. Now supposing there was a case of a tenant who was an habitual drunkard or a very bad character upon a landlord's estate, do you contend that the landlord ought to have no power of removing him without the sanction of the Court?—My contention is this, that if he served such a tenant with notice to quit the tenant would know that charges would be brought against him and proved, and he would not carry it to the Court.

10,649. I dare say that is your opinion of the probable effect, and possibly it is right, but is it your desire in a case such as I have mentioned—do you think it right that the landlord should have no power of removing that tenant without the consent of the Court—I want an answer to that, yes or no; it is a very simple question?—The option of appeal would rest with the tenant.

10,650. Then the landlord is not to remove a tenant of that description?—He would be certain to succeed in removing a tenant of that description.

10,651. Yes, but he is not to have the power of removing him without going to the Court, and getting the sanction of the Court, if the tenant appeals against him?—I am afraid you do not understand me.

10,652. No, I do not?—I think the tenant can dispute the charge, and in that case it would have to be settled by the Court.

10,653. Whether he was a drunkard or not?—Yes, if you call him a drunkard.

10,654. Now I will go a bit further, and I will take the case of a tenant who had been actually convicted of some offence. Is the landlord to be at liberty to remove a tenant of that sort without the consent of the Court?—I should think he would have the power. The tenant would in that case have the power of appeal, but there is very little probability of his appealing.

10,655. (*Chairman.*) Did I understand you to say that if a man is convicted of being a drunkard that would be a sufficient cause for eviction?—The onus of proof would rest upon the landlord, and perhaps the tenant may appeal.

10,656. Of course the first operation would be for the landlord to give notice to the tenant that he was a drunkard, and that he intended to evict him. The tenant would say, "I am not a drunkard," and then would appeal to the Court. Do you think that the Court should evict a man holding a judicial lease because he is a drunkard?—Certainly.

10,657. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) That was not my question. The last question I asked was in the case of a tenant who has been convicted of a criminal offence, which is not a question of opinion, but is a matter of fact. I asked whether, under those circumstances, the landlord is to have an absolute power of his own to evict him or not?—I should think he ought to have the power—you say a conviction proved.

10,658. Yes?—I should think that would be sufficient.

10,659. Then so far fixity of tenure would be limited?—Yes.

10,660. You would make some exceptions in the case of fixity of tenure?—Yes; I think I said so before.

10,661. (*Chairman.*) Under a lease now you cannot get rid of a man because he is a drunkard?—That would give the landlord a better chance under my proposal.

Fair rent.

10,662. (*Mr. Long.*) In regard to the duties that this Land Court will have to discharge, the most important, I take it, will be the duty of fixing a fair rent?—Yes; that will be the most important point of appeal.

10,663. That is the line that your evidence has taken chiefly, that there is a difficulty in getting a fair rent; therefore you want a Court that will have the right of arbitrating upon the question of rent?—It would probably form the basis of more appeals than any other, but it would not form the majority of cases.

10,664. It is not a question of whether it would be the most numerous, but you have pointed out to us in your evidence that there is a difficulty in getting a fair rent fixed in many cases, your own to wit?—Yes.

10,665. You desire that there should be a Land Court, or some Court created, which should so have the power of fixing a fair rent?—Yes.

10,666. What I want to know from you as a practical man, thoroughly understanding all these questions, is how you think a Court would be able to get at a fair rent; what is your idea of the principle that they ought to adopt?—They would have to have the farm valued.

10,667. By a professional valuer?—I do not say a professional valuer. He would have to be of course a practical man appointed by the Court. In making that valuation allowance must be made for the improvements which have been effected by the tenant, and the increased letting value arising from the tenant's outlay.

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10,668. What would be the next items to be considered? I understood you to say that wages would have to be considered, and the position of the labourer?—Yes; the labourer should have the power of appealing to some tribunal.

10,669. Do you propose that the Court should consider the question of wages from the point of view of whether the labourer is getting enough wages, or whether the farmer is employing enough labour?—No.

10,670. You are familiar with the fact that in many agricultural tenancies it is alleged, whether correctly or incorrectly, that insufficient labour is employed on the farm?—Yes.

10,671. That consequently the farm is not as productive as it otherwise might be?—That is quite true.

10,672. If a farm affected by such circumstances comes under the purview of the Court, would, in your opinion, the Court be entitled to say "This rent would "be a fair rent, and could be earned if the sitting tenant "employed as much labour as in our opinion he ought "to employ?"—The tenant before he could employ more labour would ask for greater security.

10,673. That is not the question; you have already admitted that in some cases it is said now that farms are not as productive as they might be, because the occupying tenant does not employ enough labour?—I did not say so, but I quite agree with you that it is so.

10,674. You agreed with me that I was right in stating it just now?—Yes.

10,675. You know, as well as anybody, that taking three or four farms side by side, there is the greatest possible variety in the amount of labour employed by different farmers?—That is quite true.

10,676. With consequently very varying results in their productive power?—That is quite true.

10,677. You who have farmed well, and who have spent money on your holding, might say of an adjoining farmer, "He might do better with his land," or, "I, if I were in his place, could do better with his land, "because I should employ double the labour he "employs?"—It would not concern me.

10,678. No, but you might say that of a neighbour?—One tenant farmer of another?

10,679. It is possible that A. might say of B. that he did not succeed in getting out of the land as much as the land could produce, because he did not go the right way to work to do it—that is said frequently in our markets is it not?—I believe it is.

10,680. You have heard it said?—Yes.

10,681. So have I. Would it be admissible to bring evidence of that character before the Court in order to support the landlord's claim for the rent that he considered to be a fair rent?—For the landlord to bring that?

10,682. Certainly?—Yes, I think the landlord would be perfectly justified.

10,683. In bringing all the evidence he could produce in the direction of showing that the tenant was not making the most of the land?—In consequence of the want of labour?

10,684. Or anything else?—I quite agree with you. I think I made the remark that the landlord should have the power of appealing to this Court in case of dilapidations arising through bad management or neglect.

10,685. That is on quitting, or on re-adjustment?—In the case of a sitting tenant.

10,686. (*Mr. Dalton.*) If the judicial rent was determined in that way, might one of the conditions be that a certain amount of money should be expended every year on labour for the next seven years?—No, not a certain amount.

Fair rent and labour.

10,687. How would you bring it in then; you fix the judicial rent on the assumption that a proper amount of labour will be employed, but you take no means of assuring that that amount of labour will be employed for the seven years?—You would have to prove that there had been some neglect in consequence of the shortness of labour.

10,688. I am assuming that you fix the judicial rent on the assumption that the same amount of labour, we will say, will be expended, as has been expended in the past, or as ought to be expended, and you fix the rent for seven years; if you do that, should there not be some condition or stipulation that a certain amount of labour shall be employed upon the land?—I do not see how you can make the stipulation, because on dairy farms the labour account is less than it is on tillage farms considerably. I do not know how you would fix the scale; but if you could prove to the satisfaction of the Court that a farmer had neglected his duties, in consequence of employing too little labour, it should be enforced against him by the Court officials.

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10,689. Might they determine the tenancy on that ground?—I think the ground would be too trivial to terminate a tenancy upon.

10,690. Had you the option of keeping on your present tenancy at a particular fixed rent?—I had no option. (*See reply by landlord*, Appendix A., XXVIII.)

Revision of agreement by Land Courts.

10,691. I think you proposed that either party should have an opportunity of going to the tribunal with respect to particular clauses in their agreements?—Yes.

10,692. That would not have assisted you in this particular case, I think?—It would have assisted me materially. I do not believe that any unbiassed official or tribunal would have admitted a clause like that I have read in any agreement.

10,693. Your difficulty at that time was, was it not, that you had no legal claim in respect of the improvements that you had carried out?—I had no legal claim, I admit that.

10,694. Then if you had gone to a land court, it would have been obliged to decide that you had no legal claim?—At that time.

10,695. At that time, I mean?—No, I do not agree with that. They would have to take into consideration the circumstances of the case, not dealing with it there at that present moment, but anterior to that time.

10,696. I understand you had no legal claim for repayment—it was a very unfortunate thing for you that it was so, but that was the condition of things?—I had no legal claim, I admit that.

10,697. Then you go to a court and you ask them about this clause, and they would have had to tell you that you had no legal claim; they could not have given you a right which did not exist in law?—No, but if I had appealed to that court on the grounds that this was an unjust clause, I think I should have had a very great chance of getting it eliminated.

10,698. But it is not so much that that is an unjust clause, is it?—It is the injustice of that clause I am now suffering from.

10,699. I should have thought it was the fact that it was the injustice of the law which gave you no legal claim to any compensation for those improvements at that time?—I really could not have claimed compensation, because they had contracted themselves out of the Act.

10,700. (*Mr. Channing.*) I understand, in talking about the land court, you are not talking as a lawyer?—No.

10,701. You are giving an opinion of its practical utility?—That is all; I am only an ordinary tenant farmer.

10,702. In what you understand by the reform, of which a land court would be a part, you would also consider that there would be a reform of the rights with regard to improvements which would have covered your improvements. I suppose your answers were meant in that sense?—That is so.

10,703. Then, when you said the land court would have helped a case like yours, you meant that the right with regard to improvements should also have been included in such an amendment of the law, did you not?—Yes.

10,704. Is the estate on which you live a large estate with a great many farms?—It is in three or four different parts of the country; in our neighbourhood there are about six or eight farms, two being large ones. Mine is the largest farm on the estate.

Existence depressio

10,705. What has been the condition of the farmers with regard to the agricultural depression; is their position very much impaired, or have they got on fairly well, the whole of them?—I should say they are about half-and-half in good positions. It is a delicate matter to give an opinion as to a man's finances.

10,706. I do not ask you to do so, but I wanted to know whether the farmers in your neighbourhood around you have been specially hit by the agricultural depression?—Those farmers farming dry land have felt it more severely than those who have been farming clay land.

10,707. I understand you yourself have farmed fairly well, that is, you have applied bones and used cake freely?—That is so.

Compensation for high farming.

10,708. One of your points with regard to the tenants' improvements would be, I suppose from your evidence, that they should have further compensation for continuous high farming over a period of years, raising the value of the grass on their farms for instance?—I did not follow you.

10,709. For better husbandry than the ordinary standard you would give compensation?—Certainly I would.

10,710. In addition to specific acts of improvement?—Yes.

10,711. There was a point which I did not quite clearly understand about this 429*l.*, the previous rent, and the 499*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*; under this agreement, is it your contention that that raising of the rent from 429*l.* to 499*l.* to a certain extent confiscated a part of the value of your improvements?—Certainly it did.

Compensation for improvements on witness's farm.

10,712. That is, you think, that the allowance of 70*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* did not cover the value of your improvements, and that the rise of 70*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* over the previous rent amounted to taking away from you part of the value of those improvements?—My contention is that in equity they were not entitled to raise my rent one farthing.

10,713. Over the 429*l.*?—Over the 429*l.*

10,714. Your contention is that you ought to have been left in the enjoyment of those improvements?—That is my contention.

10,715. (*Chairman.*) For how many years?—I think the tenancy at the present time should have been at a reduction. Different farms on the same estate have been reduced; I could prove that.

10,716. (*Mr. Channing.*) I was going to ask you that question. Of course I do not want to press you with regard to other tenants, and any questions you do not wish to answer which affects their interests you need not; but I should like to ask you, have the other tenant farmers on the estate had their rents raised or reduced, or what?—They had their rents reduced, I know, in three particular instances.

10,717. What is the rent they have been paying, and are now paying, per acre as compared with your own rent?—I believe that the highest rented farm on the estate is about 2*l.* an acre; that is about on an equality with its full valuation.

10,718. With the 570*l.*?—Yes. But allow me to explain that it is quite a differently situated farm, or rather that the natural quality of it is quite different, although the homesteads are comparatively close.

10,719. Would you explain that a little further? Do you mean to say that your own land was very much better than the others, or what?—No; this other farm that I am alluding to now is a farm which is naturally of a better quality than mine—of a better character, and upon which the tenant has not been called upon to effect any improvements. The farm which I have been occupying is in a good state of cultivation, consequently its value has been raised through my outlay.

10,720. Naturally it was not?—Naturally it was not of nearly so high a value as this adjoining farm.

10,721. Have you made any claim for unexhausted improvements on leaving now?—Yes, I have made a claim.

10,722. What was your claim?—The total claim was 290*l.* 16*s.* 9*d.*

10,723. That was for improvements under the third part of the schedule, I suppose?—Yes, I can give you the items, which are not many. One was for planting a new orchard—that was the only improvement I had effected with the written consent of the land agent. I claimed for the unexhausted value of oil cake, cotton cake, and other feeding stuffs 137*l.* 1*s.* I also claimed for the unexhausted value of lime 18*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, and for the unexhausted value of bones 95*l.* 4*s.* 1*d.*, that amounts to 290*l.* 16*s.* 9*d.*, including the orchard claim.

ounter-laims.

10,724. You referred I think to some clause in your agreement which gave the landlord special power with regard to counter claims did you not?—Yes.

10,725. Was that made use of by the landlord in counter claiming against you?—Yes. I have here the landlord's counter-claim, and there is one item in it which rather startled me when I saw it, amounting to 1,130*l.* This is how it is worded, "penalty for sale of "hay and straw in the years 1892 and 1893."

10,726. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is this matter still pending?—No, it is settled, but the day of appeal I think expires to-morrow; either party has the power of appealing within seven days after the award is given.

Compensation for improvements on witness's farm.

10,727. (*Mr. Channing.*) What is the result of the award?—This is the award. This is supplied to me by my arbitrator. I believe it is correct, and I shall have to ask you to accept it as correct; although it is not stamped. It is a copy of the stamped agreement.

10,728. Was there an umpire in the case?—There was an umpire appointed but he was not called in. The total counter-claim was 1,492*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* I can give you the particulars if you think it necessary; they are not important except this 1,130*l.*, and one item of 40*l.* I want to make an observation about the claim for rent. They claimed 285*l.*; I explained before that at the last half-year's audit I withheld a sum of 61*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*, which was made up of two equal sums of 30*l.* 13*s.* 9*d.*, which I contended that I had overpaid. My contention was allowed before the arbitrator. They claimed 285*l.*, whereas what they were entitled to and what they received was 253*l.* 11*s.* 3*d.* That is not very material. Then they claimed for tithe, which of course I agreed to, and they claimed 40*l.* for ploughing up land prohibited by agreement after notice to quit. That is wiped out because the agent discovered his mistake, and that I had only been ploughing the land that I had been allowed by my agreement to plough. The last claim is for 1,130*l.*—"Penalty for sale of hay and straw "in the years 1892 and 1893."

10,729. Was that claim made under the form of penal rents in your agreement?—Yes, that is it; under the clause here.

10,730. Was it the maximum amount of penal rents?—Yes, 10*l.* per ton.

10,731. Would you state what the amounts awarded to you and the landlord were?—For planting the new orchard, for which I claimed 40*l.* 5*s.*, I was awarded 38*l.* For the unexhausted value of lime for which I claimed 18*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, I was awarded 16*l.* 16*s.*; and for the amount claimed for bones, 95*l.* 4*s.* 1*d.*, I was allowed all but the penny. For the unexhausted value of the oil cake, cotton cake, and other feeding stuffs, I was awarded no compensation; for half-year's rent due they received 253*l.* 11*s.* 3*d.*, and the tithe, which I never disputed, making 287*l.* 11*s.* 3*d.*; then "for "ploughing up land prohibited by agreeement after "notice to quit we award no compensation." The claim was 40*l.* "For penalty for the sale of hay and "straw in the years 1892 and 1893 we award no com-"pensation." That claim was for 1,130*l.*

10,732-3. (*Mr. Everett.*) They struck that out?—They struck that out.

10,734. (*Mr. Channing.*) What is the total award to yourself and to the landlord?—I am awarded 150*l.*, and the landlord is awarded nothing.

10,735. Nothing at all?—Nothing at all.

Counter-claims.

10,736. In your opinion, does the fact that counter claims to that extent are capable of being made by the landlord or land agent deter tenants from applying for compensation under the Act?—The counter claims very often do deter tenants, because they are afraid to take them before a court. The surroundings in my case were I believe so glaring that their own arbitrator was satisfied that there had been no dilapidations arising through my management, and what he saw in the place, and what I produced evidence of, that I had consumed and brought on to the place from other land, satisfied him, so that he wiped out the whole claim.

Capricious evictions.

10,737. As far as I can make out, to sum up your case, you think the sitting tenant has no proper protection for his improvements under the present state of the law, and you also think, I understand, that tenants are liable to capricious eviction?—They are; that is my contention.

10,738. Taking those two together at any time, if a landlord chose to make use of his power under the law, he could practically confiscate a great portion of the tenant's improvements?—The greater portion of them.

10,739. Tenants in moving from one farm to another lose a great deal, and they lose in business, also, do they not?—It is a very serious matter is an eviction—a removal.

The three F's.

10,740. That means that a very serious fine is held over the heads of tenants in the present state of the law?—That is so.

10,741. So you support, as I understand, fixity of tenure and free sale, and all the rest of it, and fair rents?—Yes.

10,742. On the ground that it is the best form of protection for those evils?—My contention is that upon the establishment of an Arbitration Board or Land Court two of the "F's" would naturally follow, and immediately follow, those are fair rents and fixity of tenure, because the landlords would find that it would be too expensive a process to indulge in, to evict a tenant through caprice.

Valuation of farms.

10,743. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Were all the farms re-valued on this estate in 1884?—No.

10,744. Only yours?—Only mine, I believe.

10,745. Did you ask for a re-valuation?—I did not.

10,746. Why was your farm re-valued?—I am not allowed to give the reasons, I believe.

10,747. Was this valuation made by a competent valuer?—It was made by the agent to the estate. I had no voice whatever.

10,748. You had no voice whatever in making the selection of a valuer, I mean?—Not at all.

10,749. Is the agent a practical agriculturist?—Not very practical. He is not agent now to the estate; he left a short time afterwards.

10,750. In which way did he arrive at this valuation, do you know?—I do not know, I am sure. I should not like to give an opinion; it would not be very favourable to him, and I would rather not give an opinion. (*See reply by landlord,* Appendix A., XXVIII.)

10,751. What do you think would be the real value of the farm now if it was let minus the improvements by the tenant?—I do not think at the present moment it would be worth more than 30*s.* an acre.

10,752–3. Did this farm pay you during the last 10 years, or at least since 1884?—Well, I have made money, but not very much.

Value of improvements on witness's farm.

10,754. (*Mr. Everett.*) Shortly, I understand your case is this: the rise of 70*l.* a year, which took place in your rent in 1884, you considered was entirely due to improvements which your family had made upon the place?—Entirely.

10,755. And therefore belonged to you?—Yes.

10,756. If you capitalise that at 4 per cent. I see that comes to 1,750*l.*, but under the agreement you signed in 1884 you contracted to part with it virtually for 500*l.*, that is for seven times 70*l.*?—That is it.

10,757. They allowed you to get two more years at this 70*l.*?—But I did not actually receive 70 farthings, you see. I was compensated by paying an increased rent; a peculiar method.

10,758. But you consider that you really have lost the difference between 500*l.* and 1,750*l.* in that which was equitably yours?—I should not like to state the sum at 1,750*l.* because I do not know the scale you have calculated it upon.

10,759. I was calculating 4 per cent. at 70*l.* a year?—For how many years?

10,760. For ever. You had added a value of 70*l.* a year to this farm according to the heightened rent which they put upon it?—Yes.

10,761. Capitalising that at 4 per cent., that comes to 1,750*l.*, does it not?—Yes.

10,762. (*Viscount Cobham.*) But the improvements would not last for ever?—They would not. I think that is a high sum to fix upon them.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to Thursday next at 12 o'clock.

Twentieth Day.

Thursday, 8th March 1894.

PRESENT:

The RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
FREEMAN THOMAS, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. ROBERT GEORGE WYATT, called and examined.

10,763. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You are a tenant farmer, I believe, occupying 460 acres in the parish of Whitestaunton?—Yes.

10,764. What part of Somersetshire is that?—It is adjoining the two counties of Dorset and Devon. It is right on the boundaries of Dorset and Devon.

10,765. What is the nearest considerable town?—Taunton is the nearest considerable town. Chard is our nearest market town.

10,766–7. What distance is Chard?—Three-and-a-half miles.

10,768. Are you representing any Farmers' Associations?—No, but I was guardian for something like 20 years. I sat on the assessment committee for something like 20 years.

10,769–70. But you believe that you are speaking the sentiments of those in your own district?—Yes, and of different associations.

Existence of depression.

10,771. As to the existence of depression in your neighbourhood, is it of a serious description?—Yes. I have ascertained from the books of the board that in the adjoining parish to me with only 1,100 inhabitants there are 28 vacant cottages, and there have been 20 cottages recently pulled down.

10,772. Cottages that were previously inhabited by agricultural labourers?—Yes, principally.

10,773. What is the cause of those cottages becoming vacant?—The low prices.

10,774. Is there less demand for agricultural labour?—Yes, certainly.

10,775. Is that owing to arable land going down to grass?—A lot of arable land has gone out of cultivation.

10,776. Out of cultivation altogether?—Yes.

Characteristics of district.

10,777. And is much of it going down to grass?—It is supposed to be down to grass, but then it does not bear anything.

10,778. It has been left to itself?—Yes.

10,779. Has much land been laid away to grass besides?—Not a large quantity in my district.

10,780. What is the quality of the soil in your district?—It is a cold hill district principally.

10,781. (*Mr. Elton.*) About 800 feet above the sea, I suppose?—I should think all that.

10,782. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is it mostly under grass of one sort or another?—No, about half arable and half grass, I should say, taking ever so many parishes just about there.

Reduction in rent.

10,783. The rents, I presume, are falling considerably?—Considerably.

10,784. Can you tell us what the average fall in rents has been in your experience?—I think they must have fallen about 40 per cent. I and my family are connected with the land, and in every case I think we have dropped about 40 per cent. I think my own has dropped nearly the same amount.

10,785. You are speaking of a somewhat exceptional part of Somersetshire then, are you not?—The best land in Somersetshire has not gone down a great deal in value, not the best part of it. It is only what I call the indifferent land that is going down so much, because it is more expensive to grow crops.

10,786. I think one associates Somersetshire land with rich pastures, as a rule?—The rich pastures of Somersetshire let nearly as well as they have for a great many years.

10,787. They have not fallen to anything like that extent?—No, they have not fallen to anything like that extent.

10,788. You are speaking of your own immediate district?—I am speaking of my own immediate district; and a large portion of Dorset is the same.

Farms unlet.

10,789. Are there many farms vacant?—Not many in my neighbourhood—very few in my neighbourhood.

10,790. There is still competition for them, is there?—No, not much competition for them; I think most of the landowners in my district try to meet the tenants as much as possible.

10,791. They do their best to keep their tenants?—Yes.

10,792. But do you know of cases where farms are vacant?—Not in my district—none at all.

Uncultivated land.

10,793. I thought you said a good deal of land was going out of cultivation?—It is not out of cultivation but they do not make anything.

10,794. You mean that on many of the farms where there are still tenants the worst lands have a tendency to be left to themselves?—Yes.

10,795. They do not pay to cultivate?—They do not pay to cultivate.

Size of farms.

10,796. What is the average size of the farms in your district?—Just in my neighbourhood they average about 150 to 500 acres.

System of farming.

10,797. How are they cultivated?—On the four field system principally.

10,798. I suppose there is not much dairy farming?—It is mixed as a rule.

10,799. Are the farmers modifying their system of farming in consequence of the depression?—Yes, a great deal.

10,800. In what directions?—They do not use so much labour; a great many of them do not lay out to the extent on labour that they used to, and consequently they cannot keep so much stock. I should say there is not so much stock kept in our neighbourhood by something like 10 or 15 per cent., because if the land is laid down to grass it will not keep so much stock as it will if you grow roots on it. Artificial grasses are generally left now from two to three years, whereas we never used to leave them more than one year.

10,801. The result of that is that less stock must be kept?—Less stock must be kept.

10,802. As to the growing of wheat, is that falling off?—That is falling off considerably.

10,803. What has taken its place?—Oats and barley.

10,804. Can you sell off your hay and straw?—There are no objections on the manor that I rent of, so far as I have heard.

Restrictions in cultivation.

10,805. Do you know whether there is much restriction elsewhere on the free cultivation of farms?—There is a great restriction.

10,806. In practice?—Yes, in practice.

10,807. Is there a good market for straw?—There is now an extraordinary market for it.

10,808–9. But I suppose that is exceptional?—There is always a market for it near towns.

10,810. And always for hay, of course?—And always for hay.

10,811. Is it your opinion that there should be fewer restrictions upon farmers?—Yes, it is. In every case I am mixed up with they have all got freedom to sell off everything.

Position of tenants.

10,812. Are the tenants generally, do you consider, in a very poor financial condition?—A great many of them, a large proportion of them, are.

10,813–4. Have many left their farms?—Yes, a great many.

10,815. Have they lost their capital?—Those that have gone have—all of it.

10,816. They kept on until all their capital had gone?—Yes.

10,817. Notwithstanding those very large reductions of rents?—Yes.

Labour.

10,818. What has been the effect of the depression upon the agricultural labourers?—Nothing, except that so many of them are not employed; not the least effect else.

Wages.

10,819. Do those that are employed command the same wages?—They command just the same wages.

10,820. Do you find that the best men remain?—No, it is the worst of them that remain.

10,821. You find that the quality of labour, therefore, is falling?—A great deal.

10,822–3. You entertain no doubt on that point?—Not the least doubt.

Foreign competition

10,824. Now as to the causes of the depression, what are they, in your opinion?—Foreign competition.

10,825. You do not lay so much stress upon bad seasons?—Not so much on bad seasons as I do on foreign competition.

10,826. Do you consider that as regards the question of live stock, the recent season has had much effect?—No, except bullocks this season.

10,827. Owing to the shortness of keep?—Owing to shortness of keep in the summer; but at the present time I do not consider that there is any effect, except, as I say, with regard to bullocks.

10,828. The prices of corn have been affected solely, you consider, by the foreign competition?—Yes.

10,829. What other disadvantages do you consider that the farmer labours under, as to the burdens on land, for instance?—There are too many burdens on the land; more than the land could bear on any terms whatever.

Rates.

10,830. What alterations should you say should be made in the law with regard to the rating of the land?—I cannot see why the land should bear any portion of the sanitary rate whatever—not the least. Then I do not see what the land should have to do with the schools.

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10,831. And other local charges such as those for vaccination?—Yes, vaccination and police rates.

10,832. You would consider the burden of local expenditure should be thrown more generally upon all classes of property?—All classes of property ought to bear those.

Local government.

10,833. You do not see much objection in the result which would follow; that the management would be more centralised and less local?—I fancy that the law is driving too much for local management at the present time. I consider that they have been making too many offices at the present time. Since I have been in business, even at the union, the increase in what I call officers' charges, is something considerable.

10,834. And you would be willing to give up a large share in the management of local administration if you could be relieved at the same time of a portion of the charge?—Yes.

County Council expenditure.

10,835. What has been the result of the institution of County Councils upon the rates?—A great waste of money in all directions.

High roads.

10,836. In what directions?—In laying out a large amount on the roads at a time when, as I consider, the ratepayers cannot bear that amount. With regard to technical education also, there have been very large amounts laid out.

10,837. Would you confine yourself to the roads in the first instance. Has your County Council taken over the whole of the main roads?—They have taken over the whole of the main roads.

10,838. From the first?—From the first.

10,839. With the result that a largely-increased expenditure has taken place?—On those main roads it has.

10,840. Have not the main roads improved considerably?—Certainly, they have improved considerably.

10,841. Upon what facts do you base your statement that there has been gross extravagance in the management of the roads. Do you consider that much, too much money has been spent in regard to the improvement that has been effected?—On just the main roads the brewers' and other people's vans and carriages drive about; and then there is the expenditure in steam rolling and other expenditure in that way. Where there are country roads they have not improved but deteriorated rather.

10,842. Is it the main roads you are speaking about?—On the main roads, as I say, they are laying out enormous sums in our district, just for what I consider the public good.

10,843. Are you an expert in the management of roads?—No, but I have seen a good bit of the management of roads.

10,844. Have you been a way warden yourself?—Yes.

10,845. Then you know something about it?—Yes, I know something about it, and I have pointed out roads where they have laid out more, because it has been a main road, than has been laid out for 30 years before, although 30 years ago it was a turnpike road, and the main road from London to Exeter.

10,846. That is a matter of administration purely?—That is a matter of administration with the County Council—nothing else.

10,847–8. You consider the County Council might be the proper authority to take charge of the roads, but that they should do it at a less cost?—At a less cost.

Technical instruction.

10,849. And as to the money spent upon technical education, what have you to say upon that subject?—We have seen not the least good result from it. If there is a technical education class it is mostly attended either by people who intend to get their living by teaching, or else they would be young ladies or gentlemen, who could well afford to pay for educating themselves.

10,850. I suppose you are speaking more of dairy classes?—Dairy classes and different classes of that description.

10,851. But you have agricultural classes and lectures, I suppose?—A few; but in our district we have had no funds with regard to it, not for a great many miles round there.

10,852. Do not the farmers attend those lectures?—No.

10,853. Not the younger farmers?—No. I have never known a farmer who has what I call learnt farming, but what he lost the whole of his capital. I never knew one to succeed yet, and I have known ever so many.

10,854. A considerable amount of money is allocated for agricultural purposes out of the technical education grant?—There is a certain amount of it, but I think it is generally considered a waste.

10,855. Have you any suggestions to make as to the better application of that money?—It ought to go to relieving the rates in some way or another.

10,856. Directly for the relief of the rates?—Directly for the relief of the rates.

10,857. And give up technical education altogether?—Yes.

Analysis of food, &c.

10,858. Have you no belief that in any hands, say in the hands of the department in London, this money might not be expended with advantage to agriculture?—It may with regard to getting things and food analysed in a cheap way. If artificial manures or feeding stuffs, or anything like that were analysed at a very low rate, it might do a certain amount of good.

10,859. They are doing that now, are they not?—They are doing that now—they are paying half for samples. If I was selling milks, they would come and take a sample of my milk, and the county pays the whole of that. If I was going to mix a foreign substance with my butter, and a policeman liked to take a pound of my butter, he would say he is going to have it analysed at the county's expense; whereas if I was buying anything I cannot get it analysed at the county's expense, except it is English farm produce.

Model farms.

10,860. Are you in favour of the establishment of model farms in the counties?—Not the least.

10,861. You do not think that they would be of any advantage?—No, I do not.

Income tax.

10,862. I believe you have a strong opinion as to the incidence of the income tax upon landowners?—I think it is very hard upon landowners that they should pay income tax upon what they never receive.

10,863. And you also think it is hard that no allowance should be made to them in respect of money expended in respect of permanent improvements on their estates when assessing the income tax?—I consider that they ought to be allowed for off the property tax.

10,864. Are you in favour of any alteration in the present system of land tenure?—I do not see that any alteration is required except this, that the landlords should only stand the same as any other creditor with regard to the land.

The law of distress.

10,865. You think that the law of distress should be abolished then?—I do, because the landlord has got the chance now to take people who compete for farms, but who have got no means at all.

10,866. Do you think that has forced up the level of rents?—I think it did force up the level of rents at one time considerably.

10,867. Do you think there would be sufficient competition from men having capital for the land that would be left derelict by the non-competition of the smaller class of farmers with insufficient capital?—I do not see but what the large farms let quite as well as the small. I do not see but that the very smallest plots of land have gone down to very near the same in value as the larger ones.

10,868. Do you think that rents would have to be prepaid if the law of distress was abolished?—If the landlords like to say they should be prepaid they would not have the competition for them. The landowner I consider ought to stand the same chance as any other creditor.

10,869. You would be quite content that farmers should prepay their rents, and you think that no harm would accrue if they were men of sufficient capital?—No; I do not think it would.

Leases.

10,870. You say in your brief that many tenants have been made to sign leases or give up their homes; are leases general in your part of the country?—Not terms, not at the present time. 20 years ago nearly all the

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land was let for terms of years, but now it is most of it let under yearly agreements.

10,871. Then when you say the tenants are made to sign leases or give up their homes, are you alluding to a past state of things?—A great many landowners consider the tenants at the present time under the same lease as previously. They hold without leases, but on agreement, at the present time.

Agreements.

10,872. But there is no pressure upon tenants now to sign leases?—There are agreements; they are just tantamount to a lease.

10,873–4. That is a matter of open contract between the landowner and the incoming tenant, is it not?—Yes; some of the landowners have got very large estates, and if a tenant wished to have any particular farm, or to continue to hold any particular farm, he must either give up or continue on the terms which the steward dictates to him.

10,875. Are new agreements forced upon sitting tenants, as a general rule?—No; but there are still the old ones hanging over their heads.

10,876. They do not feel any confidence that they will not be compelled to sign oppressive agreements in the course of their tenancy?—I consider that they ought to sign a fair agreement, but not what I consider a one-sided agreement.

10,877. But is that the case in a country where there is too little competition for farms, and where the landowner is only too glad to get a tenant? Do you know many cases of the landowners running the risk of losing their tenants by forcing upon them oppressive agreements?—I know plenty that would.

10,878. That would?—That would lose their tenants if they would not submit to their old agreements.

10,879. I rather understand you to speak of a past state of things before the depression arose?—Those agreements are still hanging over their heads.

10,880. Are they strictly enforced?—In some cases.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

10,881. Should you advocate an alteration of the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883?—Yes; I should.

10,882. In what direction?—So that it would be much more simplified than it is at the present time. For instance, if I were to take a farm under the Agricultural Holdings Act at the present time, and I go out in two years' time, although I may have improved the farm to what I should call a considerable amount, many hundreds or thousands, if I had any of the farm still dirty, if I had not had time to clean it, I mean to say if all the land had never really come in its course to be cleaned, before I should get any portion of mine the valuer would deduct for cleaning what I had not cleaned, although all the farm may have been foul when I took it. Do you understand me?

10,883. Yes. Is the Act generally adopted in your neighbourhood?—No; I have never known it adopted but two or three times, and then it ended in law suits.

10,884. Then do the tenants prefer their own agreements which you say in so many cases are burdensome to them?—They would rather have agreements than the Agricultural Holdings Act.

10,885. Are they more favourable?—They are more favourable.

10,886. Therefore the Agricultural Holdings Act would not apply to them?—No.

10,887. That does not speak much for the hardships of the present system in your neighbourhood, does it? However, as a matter of fact, you say that they prefer not to be under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes, they do.

10,888. Have you known litigation to take place?—Yes.

10,889. With what results?—That the owner had the longest pocket, and he won the case after it took about two years to go on.

10,890. There had been counter-claims, I suppose?—Counter-claims and a dispute with regard to the arbitrator.

10,891. (*Mr. Little.*) Have you a case in mind?—Yes.

10,892. (*Mr. Elton.*) Was that in Dorset?—Yes.

Valuations at commencement and end of tenancy.

10,893. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Have you any suggestions to make in the direction of the improvement of this Act?—I suggest that on anyone taking a farm there should be a report on every portion of that farm as to the state it was in with regard to the fences, the cleanliness of the land, and the value of the manure that is left there. If that was entered into the schedule of the fields it would simplify matters when the tenant was going out, and he might farm right up home to the last day just the same as if he was going on from year to year.

10,894. That would be a considerable expense, would it not?—No; I do not consider so. It would be a very little expense, because, for instance, when most people take a farm there is a schedule of the fields made out, and I do not consider that it would be very much expense to state the condition of those fields.

10,895. Who would make this valuation?—I consider that the tenant should sign for each field and the steward for each field.

10,896. It should be done between the landlord and tenant?—I do not see why they could not do it between landlord and tenant and simplify it in that way.

10,897. You do not wish to call in an official valuer?—I do not see why you should at all.

Land Courts.

10,898. Is there any feeling in your part of the country as to Land Courts for the fixing of rents?—There is some with a great many people, but I think it is a very wide thing to go into. I do not think those that are asking for it would like any Government to step in and say that they should not turn a labourer out of their house at any time. I certainly should advocate that the landlord, if he is tired of a tenant, should have the chance of relieving himself. I certainly do not consider that a Government ought to step in with regard to a contract of that description.

Security for tenants' capital.

10,899. Do you think that the farmers would be satisfied if they were assured of a return of the capital that they had left in the farm?—Yes, I do consider so—the generality of them.

Agreements. Effect on labourers.

10,900. Under the present agreements, or under the present Agricultural Holdings Act they are not so assured?—They are not so assured, and it is very bad for labourers as well.

10,901. The labourers?—I say the present agreements are bad for the labourers as well, because when a tenant is going out of the farm he naturally would cease laying out any amount on labour, and the labourers would be thrown out of their homes.

Ground Game Act.

10,902. Have you any opinions as to the Ground Game Act of 1880?—I consider it a very good Act, but it does not go far enough. I consider tenants ought to have a right either by themselves or their friends to kill the game, or if they like to employ a servant to do it.

10,903. They may employ one person?—They may employ one person, but what is one person on a holding of say 1,300 or 1,400 acres to go out shooting rabbits where he has got perhaps 50 or 60 acres of cover attached to it?

10,904. Are there farms of that size in your neighbourhood?—One of my brothers farms between 1,300 and 1,400 acres. I think about 40 acres of it is cover. If he had not the right to go out with friends to destroy the rabbits the farm would not be any use.

10,905. Is it a country where rabbits naturally increase very much?—It is, and so would mine be if I had not had the privilege of killing them.

10,906. Are the rabbits encouraged by the landowner?—They are in a great many districts.

10,907. Speaking of this farm are they encouraged?—They are not in that farm. There have been several prosecutions, I may state, in my neighbourhood with regard to rabbits of a very recent date. Perhaps you would like to look at those reports (*handing in newspaper cuttings*).

10,908. Have the rabbits greatly increased upon this farm within your recollection?—No. They kill a great many thousands every year.

10,909. Who kill them?—The tenants; but then at some places they will not allow the tenants to kill them.

10,910. Since the Ground Game Act of 1880 has been passed has there been an increase or a decrease in the number of rabbits around you?—A considerable decrease.

10,911–12. We have not found that in many parts of the country, but that is the case with you?—It is the case in a large district around me.

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10,913. You do not find that the farmers are rather inclined to preserve rabbits on their own account?—No.

10,914. The fewer the rabbits the better in your opinion?—Yes.

10,915. Have hares disappeared?—In some districts they have, but just in my immediate district they are nearly about the same. I think the tenants as a rule as well as the landlord like to see some hares about.

10,916. What are these papers that you have just put in?—I have put in the report of a very recent prosecution which shows how some landlords would serve the tenant under the present law with regard to ground game.

10,917. Will you tell us shortly what the case was—never mind the names?—Two sons were out rabbiting, which they considered they had a perfect right to do; one of them had a gun, and because the keeper thought the wrong one had the gun he was summoned and had before the magistrates, but the magistrates dismissed the case. The owner and his keeper were selling the rabbits, not a man employed by the farmer. The tenant put in a letter showing how many acres of corn adjoining had been entirely destroyed by rabbits, and that the man there was killing them by the cart-load and selling them in the market; yet he could only have one to kill them.

10,918–9. That was land adjoining a cover?—Yes, I imagine it would be adjoining a cover.

10,920. But still the magistrates dismissed the case?—They dismissed it in that case. Now there was a case tried last week where a man asked his father-in-law to come and kill some rabbits for him, and because he had not written out a notice to his father-in-law that he should shoot the rabbits the owner prosecuted the father-in-law and he had to pay the cost of the summons, although he did not consider but what he had a perfect right to be there.

10,921. Do you think there would be much winged game left on a farm if you allowed an indefinite number of men to come?—I think there would be quite as much or more; because I think the tenant would value the landowners too much. I think the tenant enjoys seeing the landowner kill game quite as much and I think they would enjoy it more provided, as I say, they had the privilege of going out and shooting the rabbits or hares for sport, instead of sending out a man merely for putting them into the pocket; because where they send out a man to do it they merely send out for the purpose of destroying them and they are sent to market and put into the pocket; whereas if they had the privilege of going out with their friends they would be better satisfied. A great many farmers do not shoot themselves; I never fired off a gun myself, and although I have three or four brothers who rent something like 3,000 acres, neither of us shoot ourselves; but at the same time we are pleased to see our friends there.

10,922. A thousand acres is a large extent of land, of course; it is a very exceptional holding; but is it your opinion that the existence of rabbits in too large a quantity is a serious evil in your neighbourhood?—Yes; in some places.

10,923. In some places, but is it a widespread grievance?—You see they are preserved in the covers, and they come out and destroy the crops. I consider an owner of property, if he is stocking his cover and destroying a crop belonging to a tenant, ought to pay for the damages done; in the same way, if my stock trespass on my neighbour's land, I have got to pay the damage.

10,924. Would you say, on the other hand, if a tenant farmer encourages rabbits, that he should be called upon to pay for any damage done by them to the landlord's property—to the fences and so forth?—Yes, I do.

10,925. I understand you are alluding rather more to individual instances than to a widespread grievance?—That is a widespread thing. I mean to say there is case after case that I could put before you of what I should call recent date.

Marking of foreign meat.

10,926–7. What would be your main remedy for the depression which you are speaking of, in addition to these what I may call palliatives, which you have run through?—I say all foreign produce ought to be marked and sold as such; if there can be no facility for foreign meat being marked and branded as foreign goods, they ought to be sold in a different shop, not adjoining where the English is sold—if there is no chance of doing it by marking it. That would be one thing.

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Licensed establishments.

10,928. Do you think that every joint could be marked?—I am rather afraid that the marking of it will not answer. I consider, myself, that it ought to be sold in different establishments—not in the same shop.

10,929. Do you mean that an establishment should have a license to sell one class of meat and no other?—Yes.

10,930. Under heavy penalties?—Under heavy penalties.

Protection.

10,931. Do you see any other mode of meeting the foreign competition?—I think they will have to go back to protection, that is my opinion, or still more, labourers will have to leave the country districts for certain; that is, providing the present low prices continue.

Malt tax.

10,932–3. Is that a pretty general feeling among your neighbours?—Universally so. I think the malt tax would give a certain amount of remedy. At the present time the brewers have got what I call a monopoly. They hold nearly the whole of the public-houses in the whole country. I have understood that in 1872 they only used about 1 cwt. of sugar to 193 bushels of malt, but in 1892 they used 1 cwt. of sugar to 27 bushels of malt. That is increasing at a very rapid rate, so that they will be soon doing without malt altogether.

10,934. You would like to return to the old malt tax?—Yes, I should.

10,935. That was hardly the opinion of farmers before the abolition of the malt tax?—I am aware of that.

10,936. Can you grow good malting barley on your farm?—Not good—not first class quality.

10,937. But good enough for malting?—Good enough for malting.

Railway rates.

10,938. I believe you wish to say something as to the railway rates on agricultural produce?—The railway rates on agricultural produce are too much. I remember some years ago, about two years ago, they doubled the rates in about two days without giving any notice.

10,939. On all farm produce?—On a great deal of farm produce.

10,940. That was the beginning of last year?—That was the beginning of last year, or the year before, but then they have gone back to near about the old ones, though it is higher than it was previous.

10,941. They are somewhat higher still?—They are somewhat higher.

Rates.

10,942. You have put in a paper dealing with the various rates in the parish of Crewkerne in the Chard Union which is rather instructive. I see under the head of school board precepts the rise has been from nothing at all in 1878—when, I suppose, there was no school board?—There was no school board then.

10,943. In 1879 it was 306*l.*, in 1880 it was 501*l.*, and in 1893 it was 422*l.* Has that been coincident with an increase in the population?—No, there is very little increase in population.

10,944. Is it in consequence of the greater demands from the Education Department?—Yes.

10,945. I suppose there are still some further demands in prospect?—There are sure to be if they appoint fresh officers.

10,946. Do they propose now to spend considerable sums of money for structural or other improvements to schools?—That is so, in nearly every district.

10,947. Under the head of sanitary special precept there was none at all in 1878; was that the time of the passing of the Act?—I think that is just about the time it was passed.

10,948. That began with 250*l.* in 1879; there has been a pretty constant rise, but since 1890 it has risen from 585*l.* to 1,369*l.*?—Yes.

10,949. Is there anything special to account for that?—They cannot get rid of the town refuse. They have got some factories there and they cannot get rid of it, and no engineer that we have had can do so.

10,950. Is the town increasing rapidly?—No.

10,951. (*Mr. Elton.*) Is it due to a long litigation?—No, that all comes out of the general fund; that would not come out of the special rate.

10,952. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Surely the rise in four years from 585*l.* to 1,369*l.* must be due to some special cause?—They have been laying out a great amount of money there in experimenting how to get rid of the refuse of the town.

10,953. Without any definite result as yet?—Without any definite result.

10,954. Are many farmers rated to these rates who derive no benefit whatever from the expenditure?—Yes, I know ever so many, and some to a considerable amount.

10,955. (*Mr. Little.*) What is the rateable value of your district, do you know?—I do not think I have the figures here.

10,956. (*Viscount Cobham.*) The general rate has risen from nothing at all in 1878, 1879, and 1880 to 315*l.* in 1893; and the burial board precepts began in 1879 at 150*l.*, and have reached 340*l.* Many farmers have to contribute to all these rates without deriving any benefit except, I suppose, from the school board?—Yes, except the school board.

10,957. You say you have found in respect of school board and burial board precepts that the tenants on Lord Paulett's agricultural property have paid 1,254*l.*, although the population is less than 200?—Yes; the population is 5,000 I see in the parish of Crewkerne.

10,958. The total population being 5,000 for the entire parish?—Yes.

10,959. And you also say that not a halfpenny of the 10,366*l.* called for sanitary purposes has been expended near Lord Paulet's property, and you know one of his tenants who has paid some hundreds towards paying off loans borrowed for sanitary works; is that so?—Yes.

10,960. As to your own rates, how have they been affected; have they risen or fallen in the last 15 years?—They are near about the same.

10,961. You do not come into one of these urban districts?—No, the only one that we pay in our parish with regard to that would be the general sanitary rate.

10,962. But the total result has been that you have not been much affected?—Not much affected.

10,963–5. Whatever rise there has been has been made good by the Imperial subventions?—Yes. Then the owner in our district pays the whole of the expenses of the school. That would mean something like 6*d.* in the pound.

10,966. (*Mr. Elton.*) I believe your family has been engaged in farming for a considerable time?—Always.

10,967. And that between them they hold a large amount of land in Somerset and Dorset?—Yes, and in Devon.

10,968. You have had great experience I believe?—Yes.

10,969. What did you say the size of your brother's farm was—the Dorset one?—One of them is renting rather over 1,300 acres, and the other about 900.

Characteristics of district.

10,970. I wanted you to tell the Commission a few words more about the nature of the district in which we live. It is a hilly district you said, and that is all you said, but it is a range of hills with a good deal of dairy land intermixed, is it not?—Yes, and I think the tithes rather want to be adjusted.

10,971. I will come to that in a minute. Now I want to get the district described a little better; how many miles long is the range?—A great many miles long.

10,972. From Chard to Wellington?—Yes, from Chard to Wellington, or from the river Tone to Axminster it is a range of hills.

10,973. That is a very large district?—Very large.

10,974. Taking in part of Devon, but mostly in Somerset?—Yes.

10.975. The hills are what they call breeding hills, are they not?—Yes.

10,976. They are used for bringing up a good deal of young stock?—Young stock and sheep.

10,977. The valleys are used as dairy lands?—Yes.

10,978. Sheep farming is carried on to a considerable extent?—Yes.

10,979. I think one of your neighbours has been very successful with sheep; he got prizes the other day, did he not?—Yes, he got all the prizes at Smithfield in that class, but you see mutton has gone down rather over 50 per cent. in the last few years. The decrease in price is over 3*d.* per pound.

10,980. I know about the loss, but what I am wanting now is to get the description, because Lord Cobham said it was an exceptional district, and I am going to show that it is rather a typical district of half of Somersetshire, because half of Somersetshire, I suppose, is hills, is it not?—Not half of it, I should think.

10,981. Is it not?—No, it is a large valley.

10,982. It has got Exmoor in it, and the Black Down Hills, the Quantock Hills, and the Brendon hills?—Yes.

Dairying.

10,983. Would you mind telling the Commission very briefly the peculiar dairy system of the country; they are generally let to a dairy farmer, I believe?—A large portion of them are let to dairymen, the farmer finds the cows and lets them to dairymen at so much per head.

10,984. How much would that be, speaking roughly?—According to the districts, from 10*l.* to 12*l.* If any particular one of those cows is not good enough, or if it loses anything in regard to the milking qualities, or one should die, the farmer has got to replace it at once.

10,985. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Who has the calves?—The dairyman has the calves, the dairyman takes the whole produce of the cows.

10,986. (*Mr. Elton.*) What is the arrangement about the pigs?—The dairyman takes all the pigs.

10,987. (*Mr. Little.*) Does the farmer reserve any of the calves?—If he reserves any of the calves for breeding purposes, he either agrees to buy them off the dairyman at market price when they are a certain age, or in some districts he is under agreement to take them at so much per head, and to give so much per head to the dairyman for keeping them.

10,988. (*Mr. Elton.*) Is there any peculiar arrangement about the butter or the cheese?—No, the dairyman takes the whole of that.

10,989. I thought there was some arrangement sometimes about the pigs that were fed on the butter milk?—No.

10,990. He has them all?—He has them all.

10,991. The farmer has to find them a run, and so on?—The farmer finds sufficient food for carrying the dairy through the season, and if the ground that the dairyman is allowanced to does not bear sufficient, the farmer has to let him have other ground to run on.

10,992. Or to buy artificial food?—Yes.

10,993. Is that system, which is a very old one, decreasing at the present time?—I think it is rather decreasing.

Sheep-breeding.

10,994. What is the breed of sheep chiefly?—A large proportion of the Somerset sheep is what they call the improved Somerset and Dorset horned; they are considered very prolific.

10,995. There is a mixture of the Dorset horned and the Down, is there not—a cross?—No, I think it was originally a cross with the Devon. The Dorset horns, I think, were crossed with the Devon, which makes a rather larger size than the old Dorset horn is, but I think it is generally classed by the Dorset people where they keep the horned flocks——

10,996. I know about the Dorset people, but I am talking about this particular district, the Whitestaunton district?—They are always accepted as Dorset horns.

10,997. They are accepted as Dorset horns, but they have got one cross?—I expect so, years ago.

Rural depopulation.

10,998. Will you just tell us something further about the adjoining village which you mentioned in which there were so many cottages vacant; you employed a good many labourers from there yourself, did you not?—I used to have a great many of my labourers from there.

10,999. And do you have so many now?—Not so many—I do not employ so many as I used to.

11,000. There are no minerals in our part of the county, are there?—No.

11,001. In some parts of Somerset, I daresay, you know great changes have taken place owing to the iron ore being given up—I mean the iron mines at Brendon, and so on, but perhaps you do not know that?—I do not know that.

11,002. At any rate that does not exist in our part? —No, it does not affect the labourer in our part in the least.

11,003. You think it is nothing but agricultural causes which have led to this parish being more or less depopulated?—That is the only reason I can see.

11,004. They have some small factories, I think?—They have some small factories, or else it would be more depopulated.

11,005. There is the wool industry,—I mean wool stapling?—That is given up.

Life-hold houses.

11,006. Was this one of the parishes where the houses were held on the life-hold system a great deal?—A great many were held on the life-hold system.

11,007. Do you consider that that depreciated the value in course of time of the village; because we have been told that the life-hold houses were always allowed to fall into decay and ruin, and to tumble down at the end of the holding?—So they were, there is no doubt about that.

11,008. Do you think that has led to any change in the direction of people going away, because the houses have tumbled down?—Yes, I do.

11,009. But that system is now very much given up in that part?—That is nearly all given up now.

11,010. I think the manor belonged to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners?—Yes.

11,011. And they had a great sale there?—And cut it up into small holdings.

11,012. And offered the tenants their holdings?—Yes.

11,013. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Were those holdings taken up?—I do not think any of the tenants took them up.

11,014. (*Mr. Elton.*) Were they not taken up?—No, except one or two.

11,015. They sold a great deal of the land?—Yes.

11,016. And they made special terms to tempt the tenants by offering to let a great deal of the money remain on mortgage?—Yes.

11,017. And to be only paid by instalments?—Yes.

11,018. Yet you found that there was not very much competition among the tenants?—Not among the tenants.

11,019. There was about half left unsold altogether, was there not?—I should think nearly about half.

Ground game.

11,020. Then about the game. You have told us about that, but you were speaking of two counties, of your Dorsetshire family holdings and of your Somersetshire ones; the Dorset state of affairs of course is different, and there is a different soil, I suppose, where they have such an enormous lot of rabbits?—Yes.

11,021. You said your brother, I think, had shot some thousands?—Yes.

11,022. He makes almost a business out of it?—I do not know that.

11,023. I mean he has very large parties, at any rate? —Yes.

11,024. He keeps it as a game property to some extent, either for business or for pleasure; he has a great deal of shooting?—He has a great deal of fun out of it.

11,025. In your own district have there been no complaints of that kind?—No; no complaints.

11,026. About the cause of the diminution of the rabbits, the wet season of 1879, I suppose, had something to do with it?—I should think that that made a considerable difference.

11,027. In that part of England was not the rabbit very much diseased with the sheep disease?—Yes.

11,028. And they died in consequence?—Yes.

11,029. And never got up again?—They have never recovered since.

Low prices.

11,030. (*Mr. Everett.*) You attribute, I think, by far the principal part of the existing trouble to the low prices?—Yes.

Valuation at commencement and end of tenancies.

11,031. You told us in regard to the conditions under which you thought land should be hired that you would recommend a statement when a farm was entered upon of the condition of each field to be kept for comparison when the farmer left?—Yes.

11,032. Do you think that that is as good a way as can be desired of ensuring that the landlord shall not be wronged or the outgoing tenant done injustice to?—That is my opinion.

11,033. If he let the land get into a bad state the outgoing tenant would be fined?—Yes.

11,034. And if he has kept it in a high state, if he has improved it upon the state in which he took it he would be compensated?—Yes.

The malt tax and price of barley.

11,035. And the landlord's interest would be protected. I am obliged to you for advocating that, because it has always appeared to me to be the best way there is of handling the land as between the landlord and the tenant. Then you alluded to the malt tax, and expressed the opinion that we have suffered by the repeal of the malt tax; you also told us that barley has, to some extent, taken the place of wheat, the reason being, I imagine, because barley has not gone down so much as wheat has?—Yes.

11,036. Has not everything that we grow on the farm gone down to some extent, wheat, barley, oats, live stock, and wool; have they not all gone down?—All have gone down something like 30 per cent. or more.

11,037. Has not barley gone down less than the other things?—Yes; but I think there would be a lot better market for barley provided that the malt tax was put on again.

11,038. It looks a little singular to attribute to the repeal of the malt tax what fall has taken place in the price of barley when all those other articles of produce on the farm have gone down more than barley has?—I am well aware that barley has gone down less in value than anything else.

Protection.

11,039. Then in regard to protection, you frankly expressed your opinion that that was the real remedy for our complaint?—I think it must be.

11,040. Are you aware that there are other countries in Europe now enjoying protection where the farmers are in quite as bad straits as they are here; Germany, France, and Italy, for instance?—I am aware of that; but then in those countries there are not what I consider the facilities that we possess in this country with regard to selling the farm produce.

11,041. Do you think it would help us more than it has helped them?—Yes, I do.

11,042. Are you also aware that we had protection in England earlier in the century?—Yes; the thing was different then; I should be very sorry to see protection in what I call dry things. All I want to see protection for is in order that the land may be cultivated so that sufficient labour may be kept upon the land to keep it in a good state, not a bad one.

11,043. You want protection because you want a better price?—Not particularly because of the price as because the labourers should have something to do. Everyone is complaining that the labourers are driven into the towns, and as I say they are bound to be driven into the towns more if the thing cannot pay for growing; and as for growing wheat at something like 12*s*. a sack, English land I say is bound to go out of cultivation.

11,044. I was wondering whether you were aware that earlier in this century a similar fall of prices took place after 1819 to what is taking place now, and that the farmers of that day resorted to protection in order to save themselves, and that protection continued from 1815 to 1846, 31 years, and that during that period of protection there were no less than four inquiries into agricultural distress similar to that which we are holding now, and that they did not find that protection saved them from the distress. You perhaps have not had your attention called to that?—I have not had my attention called to that particular thing.

11,045. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Are you a tenant on a large or a small estate?—Only about 2,000 or 3,000 acres.

11,046. How long have you occupied your farm?—24 years.

11,047. Is it a pasture or a mixed farm?—A mixed farm.

Rent; and prices.

11,048. What is your present rent per acre?—I think it is about 17*s*. an acre, it used to be 27*s*.

11,049. What is the average reduction in your neighbourhood?—About 40 per cent.

11,050. What would you say the average reduction in farm produce would be?—I should say taking the average about 33 per cent.

11,051. Do you consider that the reduction of rent is in fair proportion to the reduction in prices?—Certainly not. There are three rents to be made before there can be anything else. I consider that if you take the produce at 33 per cent. or 30 per cent. less, and only take 40 per cent. off the other there is 90 per cent. difference. No farmer can exist on a mixed farm until he has made three rents.

11,052. Would you take all that out of the rent or out of something else?—I mean to say that a very large proportion of the last few years has been taken out of the tenant's capital. Some of them have had to take it out of their banking account, and out of money they may have had invested, and a great many of them have taken it out of the land, deteriorating it in value.

11,053. You told us that a great many farmers had lost all their capital and left their farms; what became of those farms?—Let to other people, most of them.

11,054. At a reduction?—At a great reduction.

11,055. Did those farmers apply for a reduction before it was too late?—I cannot tell you; they did not get a reduction enough for certain.

11,056. They must have known for some years that they were spending their capital?—They must.

11,057. This was not in your district, I understand?—Not in my immediate district.

Rates.

11,058. You also complained of the rates being very heavy; may I ask what is the system or custom of the assessment committee in your district in fixing a fair rateable value?—We take about 7½ per cent. off the real rent.

11,059. Has the rateable value been reduced in proportion to the reduction of rent?—Yes.

11,060. About 30 per cent.?—Yes.

Deteriorated cultivation.

11,061. Is the land as well cultivated in your district now as used to be the case formerly?—No, certainly not; especially as I say on many estates. I do not say in my immediate neighbourhood. But then I can go for seven miles where it used to be nearly all hill arable land, straight ahead, and now I do not think there are more than two or three fields of it cultivated; there is no labour laid out upon it.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

Valuation at commencement and end of tenancy.

11,062. (*Mr. Channing.*) I did not quite understand how you would wish the procedure of the Agricultural Holdings Act to be altered, or rather how you would wish compensation to be settled between the outgoing tenant and the landlord in case he had to deal with him?—I mean to say that if the majority of the country, through the Parish Councils or District Councils, wish to have what I consider a public surveyor, they ought to be able to do it, and whoever that surveyor may be when the farm is let he should be bound to go over that farm and make a statement with regard to every field.

11,063. And would you employ the same man at the end?—Yes; or if that man was dead there would be the report on that particular field in the schedule.

11,064. Are you in favour of giving a free hand to a surveyor or valuer of that kind, to say how much the holding has been improved or deteriorated, or would you adhere to the schedule system with all these items and details in the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I think he ought to be the judge—not the Agricultural Holdings Act.

11,065. You would give him a free hand to say how much, on the whole, the farm had been improved or deteriorated during the time?—Yes, during the tenancy.

Ground game.

11,066. Then, I think, you said something about tenants, in some cases, not being allowed to kill rabbits. I should like to understand what you meant by that exactly?—As I say, in a great many cases a landowner, or the keepers that are under him, will only allow the tenant or one person, appointed in writing, to kill rabbits.

11,067. You mean, then, that the Ground Game Act does not go far enough?—It does not go far enough.

11,068. I did not quite understand your point?—In some districts in my neighbourhood there are gentlemen who come down and rent large tracts of shooting; they stock the whole of the coverts with game and rabbits, and the rabbits go out and do a considerable amount of damage. Now, if my stock trespasses upon the neighbours I have got to pay for the whole of the damage they have done, and I cannot see why the owner of those coverts, or the tenants rather, should not pay the same; I consider the tenant, whoever rented it, ought to pay for the damage.

Rent; and prices.

11,069. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I did not quite understand how you made out that your rent was not reduced to the extent that it should have been considering the fall in produce; you said there was a 30 per cent. fall in produce?—Yes; 30 per cent.

11,070. And I understand you think from that, that there ought to be a 90 per cent. fall in rent?—I should say quite 90 per cent. fall in rent.

11,071. There ought to be?—I do not say there ought to be.

11,072. If there was a fall of over 33 per cent. in the produce, you would say there should be no rent?—I mean to say that I have made no rent this year or two above the working expenses of the business.

11,073. How do you make it out that there ought to be three times as great a fall in the rent as in the produce?—Because every tenant must make three rents.

11,074. In what way?—We will take the rent as one of them; there is the labour, which is another of them, and there is the manure and artificial feeding stuff which is another of them; there are the three rents.

11,075. You have one rent which you pay to the landlord?—There is one rent I pay to the landlord, and there is another rent I pay to the labourers.

11,076. Then do you mean that you ought to pay your landlord 30 per cent. less, your labourers 30 per cent. less, and pay 30 per cent. less of the other matter?—We cannot take 30 per cent. less of the other matter.

11,077. You think then, that whatever the percentage of the fall in the produce be, it should be multiplied by three, and deducted from the rent that you pay your landlord?—I say it should for a person to make a profit on the farm.

11,078. He cannot make a profit without it?—No, he could not.

Reduction in expenses.

11,079. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I suppose you would set off against that fall of 33 per cent. in the value of produce the increased cheapness of feeding stuffs?—There is a little in that, but in a hill district you see we feed nearly the whole of our produce with what we grow, all except barley.

11,080. Your labour bill is less?—The labour bill is less, certainly.

Rates.

11,081. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What are the rates in the pound in your parish, do you know; take first the poor rate?—About 15 per cent.

11,082. I mean what is the rate in the pound now?—3*s.*

11,083. That would be altogether?—Altogether.

11,084. That is the poor rate, the county rate, and the highway rate?—Yes.

11,085. To what extent has the county rate gone up of late years?—I think it has gone up 4*d.* or 5*d.* in the pound.

11,086. Do you attribute that to the increased expense on the main roads?—A great deal of it.

11,087. I thought that in most counties the money that they receive from the Imperial revenue covers the cost of the main roads—it does not in your's, I suppose?—I do not know whether it does or not. I know the roads are maintained and I never could see how the County Councils could increase the rates so much if it were not for that.

11,088. You are quite sure they have increased it by about 3*d.* in the pound?—They have more than doubled it.

11,089. Then in Crewkerne, which you were speaking of, do you know what the aggregate rate in the pound is there? You have given us a great many figures as to the amount levied, but do you not know what it is in the pound?—I do not know what it is in the pound.

11,090. The land in that parish would be rated at a fourth for the sanitary rate, would it not?—At a fourth.

11,091. It would not be rated so heavily?—I am well aware of that.

11,092. Do you think it is unfair that it should pay any proportion?—I consider that it is very unfair to pay any proportion of it.

11,093. Is not the land worth more on account of its being so near the town? Does it not let for more in consequence?—No, it does not seem to.

11,094. As a rule, I suppose, it does?—I mean to say there is a lot of land there, a mile and a half or two miles out of the town, or what I should call three miles out of the town.

11,095. It may be that it is a big district, but the land which is close around the town, I suppose, is worth a good deal more in consequence?—It is let as accommodation land, not let as agricultural land.

11,096. It fetches a higher price?—It fetches a higher price just near the town, being let for accommodation land to tradesmen and butchers, and people of that description.

11,097. In those cases where it fetches the higher price, do you not think it is fair that the land should contribute to the sanitary rate?—I cannot see what the land has to do with the sanitary rate, because the land happens to be close to the town.

11,098. It contributes to all the rates of the district. Do you think it should contribute to the poor rate?—Yes, I do.

11,099. What distinction do you draw then between it being right for it to be rated for the poor rate and for the sanitary rate?—The sanitary rate is for the benefit of the town, and for carrying off of the people's nuisance. If it was in the country the landowner would pay the whole of the expense himself.

11,100. What do you think is one of the reasons why there is so much greater extravagance on the main roads? Would you say because the expenditure is spread over a larger area?—Yes, and each area is anxious to get all they can.

11,101. Would it not have the same effect if the local expenses were paid out of Imperial subventions, instead of being paid out of the rates in each parish; that is, if they ceased to be local, and were paid by a central authority, which is, I think, what you propose for sanitary and all those other purposes; would it not lead to increased expenditure in the same way?—I consider that house property in the district ought to pay the whole of the sanitary rate.

11,102. It is not the sanitary rate alone; you say in your proof, police, vaccination, lunacy, education, and registration as well?—I consider that ought to be paid out of the Imperial funds.

11,103. You know a great portion of it is now so paid?—I know a portion of it now is.

11,104. Probably more than half?—I consider the whole of it ought to be.

11,105. Would not that lead to increased extravagance?—No, I do not see that it would.

11,106. Not in the same way that the fact that the main roads are paid now entirely by the county rates has led to extravagance in your district in that respect?—No, because the police would be under superintendence the same as they are now, and they would receive the same pay.

11,107. But the county roads have been under the same control to a great extent; the county had to certify that the expenditure had been incurred before they repaid any part of it?—Yes, but a good many of the county roads used to be turnpikes, and those that travelled over them had to pay.

Rent.

11,108. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Did I understand you to say that you have not made any of your rent this year?—Not when I have paid for the losses.

11,109. What?—Not until the winter is over.

11,110. Then, I suppose, if we were to see a further fall in prices, it would, in your case, cease to be a question of rent at all?—It is at the present time with me. If I thought prices were going to continue as they are now I should cease farming.

11,111. Even if you had no rent at all you could not make it pay?—No, I could not—not on arable land.

11,112. The reductions in your district, I think you said, were something like 40 per cent., and there are many farms vacant?—No, I say there are in a great many districts, and there are a lot within three miles of me that people do not do anything to because the tithe comes to more than the land is worth.

11,113. In fact there is very little competition for the farms?—No competition for that class of land.

Oppressive agreements.

11,114. Where that is the case, cannot a tenant who is not hampered by any existing agreement make very good terms for himself?—Not if it belongs to a large owner; they would rather see it uncultivated than they would alter their terms.

11,115. Has that been your experience?—It has.

11,116. In Somerset?—Not particularly in Somerset, but I think it is the general opinion.

11,117. You say they would rather not alter their terms; but you tell me there has been a general reduction in the rent of something like 40 per cent.?—Yes.

11,118. When you go to take a farm what is the most important item in your agreement that you first begin to consider; is it not the rent?—Yes, the rent.

11,119. Very well; then on your own showing you are able to make terms to this extent, that you can get a reduction of 40 per cent. in the rent. Do you mean to tell me that if on that most important point you can make terms, you cannot make terms on other parts of the agreement?—With a great many owners you could not.

11,120. You surprise me very much?—That is the case.

11,121. How do you account for that?—I cannot account for it only by the obstinacy of some gentlemen.

Compensation for improvements.

11,122. What you want, I understand, is that you should have fair compensation for the improvements you have made on the farm when you leave, and when you have not had the opportunity of reaping the advantage of them?—Yes.

11,123. If that is conceded to you, and if that is arranged in a simple manner you would be satisfied?—As far as I am personally concerned I should be satisfied.

11,124. You do not want to see anything in the nature of the Irish Land Bills in this country?—No, I do not.

Protection.

11,125. With regard to what you said upon protection I understand that you would like to see protection generally, and you specially mentioned barley. Would you be in favour of an import duty upon foreign barley?—Yes, and upon foreign wheat too; but I mean to say only so that it should pay for the labour of growing on the poor lands. I do not want to get it at what I call an extravagant price.

Duty on barley.

11,126. A suggestion has been made to us by one or two witnesses, that if part of the present duty upon beer was remitted and an equivalent revenue raised upon foreign barley, that would be in many districts a very material help to agriculturists. Do you share that opinion; do you think it would be of material assistance?—Doing what?

11,127. If part of the duty now raised upon beer itself was remitted and the equivalent revenue was raised by a duty upon foreign barley instead, would that be a material help to the agriculturist?—I do not consider that it would at all.

11,128. You do not think so?—No, I do not; I would be rather of the contrary opinion.

11,129. And why is that?—Because the large portion of the foreign barley is brought in for feeding stuff.

11,130. Then you think a duty upon foreign barley would not meet your purposes?—I do not think it would.

11,131. I thought just now you said you would like to see a duty on barley and on wheat too?—I say so long as it paid for growing.

11,132. So long as what?—So that it may be got to a price that the English crop may pay for the labour of growing it.

11,133. Where is the point at which it pays for growing?—It does not pay for growing.

11,134. No, but where is the point you are referring to,—do you mean after all rent has ceased and disappeared?—I should like to see a small rent so that the

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landowner should have a chance to live and keep up his repairs. The expense of keeping up repairs is a considerable item I know to an owner of property.

11,135. You cannot make it quite clear to me, I am afraid, what your idea is as to the point where it becomes profitable to grow? How much rent must be paid first?—That is a difficult question to answer.

Cattle disease.

11,136. I will not press you upon that. Have you ever suffered from cattle diseases in your district, such as foot-and-mouth disease or pleuro-pneumonia?—Yes.

11,137. A recurrence of those diseases now, I suppose, would be very injurious?—Yes, it would.

11,138. Are you of the same view as many witnesses who have told us they would like to see all imported animals slaughtered at the port of debarkation in this country so as to prevent the possibility of any recurrence of disease?—I think we may get disease even if that is done.

11,139. Would you go further and prevent the import at all?—No, I should not.

11,140. What?—No, I should not have protection for the cattle so far as that.

11,141. I understood you to say that slaughter at the port would not be sufficient to prevent the importation of disease?—Disease would break out in this country without any accounting for it.

11,142. You are of opinion then that these diseases are indigenous?—Yes, certainly.

11,143. On what do you base your opinion?—I have had foot-and-mouth disease strike in my farm twice without any one near getting it. I have isolated and they have got well.

11,144. But you have never had a case of foot-and-mouth disease break out on your farm unless there have been other cases in the country?—Not without there have been other cases in the country, but then not within a great many miles.

11,145. Are you aware that it is held by the experts on this subject in the Veterinary Department of the Government and elsewhere, that these diseases are not indigenous but come entirely from abroad?—I am rather of a different opinion from those.

11,146. You are?—I cannot agree with their opinions.

11,147. Then you are not one of those who desire to see any more stringent measures taken to prevent the introduction of these diseases from abroad?—No.

Reduced farming.

11,148. You told us I think that farmers neither keep so much stock nor do they grow so much corn; that is all owing to the same cause, I suppose?—That is all owing to the same cause.

11,149. That it ceases to pay?—You see, owing to their not cultivating the land, they cannot keep so much stock. A few years ago the farmers were recommended to seed down the land to keep more stock, but seeding down the land means keeping a lot less stock.

Low prices.

11,150. I think your evidence generally comes to this, does it not, that the real cause of the depression is the fall in prices, and that the only remedy is some rise in prices?—Yes, that is the only remedy.

Dairying.

11,151. (*Mr. Little.*) You have told us that dairying it carried on to a considerable extent, and that the cows were let, did you say they make about 10*l.* to 12*l.*?—Yes, from 10*l.* to 12*l.*

11,152. What did they make 10 to 15 years ago?—From 12*l.* to 15*l.*

11,153. Then there has been a very serious decrease in the price which the cowman or dairyman pays to the farmer?—There has.

Restrictions in leases.

11,154. You spoke of the conditions of leases and agreements; what are the particular conditions that you complained of?—In some instances the owners bar the tenant from selling off any portion of the things; they bar them to crop fields except in some peculiar way or other; and they must consume nearly everything in some particular way.

11,155. Those are the principal complaints?—Those are the great ones.

11,156. That the farmer is compelled to farm in a certain way, and obliged to consume the products?—Yes.

11,157. That is very much relaxed now, is it not?—I think it is relaxed to a certain extent in many cases.

11,158. But it is still kept in the agreements?—Yes.

11,159. And it is held over the head of the tenant and may be the ground for a claim for compensation by the landlord?—Yes, I have known such cases not long ago.

11,160. But you would not prohibit such conditions by law, would you—you do not propose to forbid such agreements?—I should like the law to forbid such agreements.

11,161. You would like the law to interfere?—I should.

11,162. I thought I understood you that you did not want to interfere between the landlord and the tenant?—Not with regard to what rent he is paying.

11,163. But you would as to the conditions of letting?—Yes.

11,164. As to the conditions of cropping and the sale of produce, you would wish the law to interfere between the landlord and the tenant?—That is provided the tenant keeps his farm up to a certain standard.

11,165. Would you ask that the State should settle the terms upon which the landlord should let his land with regard to the cropping and the sale of produce?—Yes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act. Compensation for unexhausted improvements.

11,166. You said that the Agricultural Holdings Act was not made use of; do the agreements, of which you complain, give compensation for unexhausted improvements?—Not many of them.

11,167. When a tenant quits in your neighbourhood, what is he paid for?—In a great many cases for scarcely anything at all.

11,168. What is the term for quitting, what is the time of year?—Lady-day.

11,169. Does the incoming tenant have the right of pre-entry for sowing the corn?—Yes.

11,170. The winter corn?—Growing corn.

11,171. Is the manure paid for, or is anything allowed for it?—No.

11,172. Is nothing allowed for the artificial food that may be used?—There is in some cases, but not in many according to the agreements.

11,173. It is not usual to put in the agreement any condition for such compensation?—No, not as a rule.

11,174. If the tenants do not get it by agreement or by the Agricultural Holdings Act, they get no compensation?—They would get none.

11,175. You think that when a tenant takes a farm in foul condition if he leaves it clean, he should be compensated for that?—Yes.

11,176. Then you do not consider that it is the duty of the farmer to keep and leave his land clean?—Yes, I do, to keep it clean.

11,177. I presume that if he takes the farm in a foul condition he knows the state of it before he takes it?—Yes.

11,178. And he takes it at a correspondingly less rent?—He would not if he only stopped there two years or three.

11,179. You mean he has not had time?—He has not had time to do it.

11,180. Then your contention is that if a man has not had time to reap the benefit of his improvements he should be compensated?—So he should otherwise.

11,181. If he has had time?—Yes.

11,182. We will say that he takes a farm in foul condition, and in seven years he leaves it clean, would you say he was then entitled to compensation?—I do consider he would be.

11,183. Even supposing he got a consideration in the rent he gave when he entered?—He takes it at the market value when he enters I imagine.

11,184. Does not the market value decrease by its being foul?—Yes, and would not the market value be increased when he is giving it up by its being clean?

11,185. Certainly; but the tenant makes an agreement with the landlord and he says, your farm is in very foul condition, I can give you nothing for the first year; you have heard of such a case as that I suppose?—I have.

11,186. Is he not paid in that way for putting it into condition?—It would be very poor pay.

11,187. Must you not assume that he is paid if he makes that agreement; would you not be compensating him twice over if you first of all gave him a year's rent for clearing the land, and then paid him the difference between clean land and foul?—You would have paid him then.

11,188. You would pay him twice over?—Yes.

11,189. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I suppose you would allow it to be considered as a set off to the tenant's claim?—Yes.

Income tax.

11,190. (*Mr. Little.*) You have proposed that the income-tax should be levied only upon the net rent—the rent that the landlord actually gets?—Yes.

11,191. And you would allow him a reduction for repairs?—Yes.

11,192. You would do the same, I suppose, in the case of house property?—With house property the same.

11,193. House property would get a much larger reduction than land?—Not so large in proportion as you would imagine, I suppose.

11,194. The repairs upon house property would be greater than upon land?—It would, a certain amount, but not a great deal.

11,195. It would surely be larger?—I think there are a great many farm houses and cottages, and farm buildings now, that are let at present rents, that would wear out and would cost quite as much in repair per pound of rent as house property would.

Changes in system of cultivation.

11,196. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Have the farmers in your part of the country struck out any new lines themselves during these times of depression?—No.

11,197. Do you think that there are any new openings that they might follow—any changes in their agricultural methods?—No, I do not see that there are.

Restrictions in leases.

11,198. Then those stipulations in the agreements are not the cause of preventing them changing the mode of their agriculture?—I certainly think they might change their mode of agriculture providing they had freedom to sell at any particular time they like. It would not be of any use for a tenant to hold over two or three years' hay at the present time, because if he did he has got to consume it all before he leaves; but if he was allowed to hold it over and had the chance of selling it, as hay and straw always rise in price occasionally, I consider it would be a great advantage to him.

11,199. If he were to do that without having to bring an equivalent back to the land again, would the land be kept in a proper condition?—They always do I imagine.

11,200. They always do what?—Always bring it back I imagine.

11,201. You imagine that?—Yes, that is the case; it must be the case.

Valuation at commencement and end of tenancies.

11,202. I understood you to say in answer to Lord Cobham that you considered the landlord and the tenant should agree upon the state in which every field in a holding was, and that it should not be done by an official referee?—I say they could or could not; they could refer it to a referee or make those terms themselves; but it certainly ought to be binding, and that statement should be entered in their agreement.

11,203. I am afraid I do not quite follow your answer. I said that I understood you to say in answer to Lord Cobham, that you would leave it to the landlord and tenant to draw up a statement when a man entered his farm of the state that every field was in, and then that that should be agreed upon, and that the state of the fields should be also agreed upon when the man left his farm when the tenancy ceased?—I think that would be fair.

11,204. Do you expect that those two would agree upon these matters so as to avoid the appointment of any official man to settle the matter?—I do not see why they could not. They would certainly have to appoint an official when the tenant went out.

11,205. They would have to have an official then?—They would have to have an official when the tenant went out, for certain.

11,206. But not when he entered?—I do not see that they would require one when he went there.

11,207. Would it not be a simpler way to have one referee to settle, whose opinion would be put upon record? If he is going to settle the matter when the man goes out, surely it is fair that he should settle the matter when the man comes in?—It would be a very large thing to go into—for instance, if an official had to take charge of 10, or 20, or 40 parishes, it would take him some time to make a field statement of them.

11,208. (*Mr. Clay.*) With regard to this question of having the fields scheduled of course generally the outgoing tenant's cropping is scheduled, is it not, and there would be no great hardship if he did call an extra man in, a referee or call him what name you like, to give him an index of the state of that farm when the tenant enters; that is your opinion?—That is my opinion.

11,209. So that when that tenant left, that document would go far to prove the condition of the farm, at the time of the entry, and the condition of the farm at the outgoing?—Yes.

11,210. That is your opinion?—That is my opinion.

11,211. With regard to the matter of assessing the compensation at the end of that time, would it satisfy you that an official referee appointed in that way, should go and do the work, taking that document in his hand and settling the increased or decreased fertility of the farm as between the entering and the going out?—Yes, that would do.

Compensation for unexhausted improvements.

11,212. With regard to a question that Mr. Little put to you if a tenant farmer entered into a farm foul, would you say he would get his compensation if he improved the farm?—He would then.

11,213. Then if the landlord let that improved farm, would he get his compensation in the increased rent, owing to the improvements?—Yes.

11,214. So that both would be benefited?—Yes.

The Ground Game Act.

11,215. Regarding the Ground Game Act, one person on the farm is allowed to kill game just now, but if one or two people on the farm were allowed to kill rabbits when they over-run the land, would that satisfy you?—I think if they are stocking the adjoining lands, it would not satisfy me, that is, if the owner preserves rabbits in coverts, and the tenant could not in any way whatever keep them from coming out and eating his crops.

11,216. You have to keep up your fences, and you have to keep your stock in have you not?—Yes.

11,217. If the landlord has plantations where he breeds stock, I do not say of what kind, but say rabbits or hares, why should he not wire fence his plantations, and keep that said stock in?—I think he ought.

11,218. And that would satisfy you?—Yes.

11,219. It would be only just and right that every man should keep his own stock on his own farm?—Yes.

Protection.

11,220. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Your motive for desiring protection is, to keep land in cultivation, and to keep labour upon the land?—Yes.

11,221. Is it in the interest of the agricultural labourer that you propose that?—I speak it as much for the agricultural labourer as for any other class. I think it would benefit all classes, not only the agricultural labourer, but the townspeople also.

11,222. But the agricultural labourer, I think you said, has not suffered by the depression?—There are not so many of them employed, but I do not believe that they suffer from it, because wages have kept about the same.

11,223. Those who are employed are better off than they were before?—Yes, they are better off than they were before.

11,224. And those who have gone away, I presume, have gone away to better themselves?—I suppose that is what they went away for, but I do not imagine they have.

11,225. Then the agricultural labourer is not going to be so much better off from the protection that you propose?—There would be more of them employed in the country.

11,226. But if they are better off than they were before, and if those who have gone away are employed elsewhere, I presume it would be at still better wages; then what is the benefit that that class is going to get from your protection?—You see the very best have gone into the towns, and they have, by being better labourers, driven out a great many other weak labourers from the towns, and a great many of them are scouring the country and living upon the rates. See the quantities that are calling in at every union in the district every day; they are living, as I say, on the rates.

11,227. But pauperism is much less than it was 20 years ago, is it not?—Pauperism is certainly less, but commodities of life have decreased in more rapid proportion.

11,228. Still the decrease in the price of commodities would not do much good to the men who have no money to pay for them; that is to say, it would do no particular good to the pauper?—It would—a considerable amount of good; for instance, a large proportion of it you see is given as out-door relief. If bread was 8*d*. per loaf instead of 3*d*., the pauper would not require so much relief certainly.

11,229. That is a good thing for the ratepayer, but I do not see that it matters much to the pauper what his loaf costs so long as he gets his loaf?—You see in some districts it is all paid in coin, and there is no bread allowed at all; a great many unions pay the paupers all in money.

11,230. Still you admit as a matter of fact that pauperism has not increased?—I do not consider that pauperism has increased.

11,231. And the agricultural labourer who remains upon the land is better off than he was before?—Yes, he is certainly better off than he was before.

11,232. Then what is the particular advantage to him from protection?—I do not see any advantage to him except, as I say, that more of them would be employed.

11,233. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I think you said in answer to a question in your examination in chief that you wished to keep the labourer on the land?—So I do.

11,234. (*Mr. Giffen.*) I am asking whether that is proposed in the interest of the labourer, and then I am asking how far that agrees with the statement that the labourer has not suffered by the depression of trade but that he is better off than he was before?—So they are; what are left in the country; but then there is only half of them, and the others have got nothing to do there.

11,235. Still if the man that would be employed upon the land is working at something else?—He may or may not be.

11,236. Why should he go to the land if he is better off than he was before—that is the question I am putting?—I do not see why thousands should collect in the towns and be unemployed if those thousands could be employed on the land.

11,237. That is just the other point. The question I put was whether there was more unemployed than there was before?—There is nothing like the quantity employed on the farms that there used to be.

11,238. Not on farms but in other places. There is no increase of pauperism throughout the community? You have no answer to that question?—No, I have not.

11,239. Have you considered apart from the desirability of having a larger cultivation of land for whatever reason what the whole aspect of the question would be to the community as a whole if there were a change to protection, or have you merely looked at the desirability of having more land in cultivation?—I do not think it would raise the price to what I should consider a large amount. If we were to double the present price it would not raise the price of bread more than three halfpence a loaf.

11,240. Still you have merely looked at the question of keeping the land in cultivation, and you have not gone much into the question of the pros and cons as affecting the whole interest of the community?—I think the whole interest of the community would suffer but very little.

11,241. Still there would be many things to be considered; some would have to pay more for the bread than they do now?—They would certainly.

Duty on wheat.

11,242. What would be a sufficient duty on wheat, to cause wheat to be grown at home; what would be the amount of duty that you have in your mind?—I should say put a duty on wheat until you raise it to about 1*l*. a sack; but when we come to 1*l*. a sack, I should take the duty off.

11,243. (*Mr. Clay.*) That is 40*s*. a quarter?—Yes. As soon as it came to that, I should reduce the duty; but until it did come to that I would raise the duty by artificial means.

11,244. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You would have a sliding scale?—I would have a sliding scale.

11,245. I suppose you have not studied very much, the controversies about sliding scales as compared with fixed duties upon wheat which existed in former years?—I have not compared them.

The marking of foreign meat.

11,246. With regard to the branding of foreign meat, about which I think you said something, are you quite certain that that proceeding would benefit the agricultural interest?—I think it would and that it would benefit other interests as well.

11,247. Would it raise the price of home-grown meat?—I think it would raise the price of home-grown meat.

11,248. There have been a good many statements to the effect that probably it would not raise the price of home-grown meat, but that it might have the opposite effect?—I think it would raise the price of home-grown meat.

11,249. Then to raise the price of home-grown meat, is your object?—Yes, and not to deceive the public.

11,250. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Are you speaking of the best home-grown meat only or of all home-grown meat?—All home-grown meat.

Uncultivated land.

11,251-2. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Can you give me any idea of the per-centage of land in your neighbourhood that you consider to be out of cultivation in consequence of the low prices, not merely laid down to grass, but out of cultivation altogether?—In my immediate neighbourhood there is, you might say, none but what is called growing grass, but then if it is what I call cultivated weed, instead of the quantity of stock decreasing, it would increase.

11,253. Still it is not absolutely out of cultivation, it produces something?—It produces something, but it is of very little use.

Rent; and prices.

11,254. You would not approve of a sliding scale of rents, that is to say, that rent should rise and fall exactly in proportion to the rise and fall of the prices of the produce?—No, I should not.

11,255. You think that if the gross produce goes down rents should go down in still greater proportion—that I think was the effect of what you told us, that if the gross produce falls in price say 20 per cent., the rent paid to the landlord should fall much more than 20 per cent.?—It would be bound to.

11,256. We had a witness before us the other day who thought that agricultural depression would be diminished very much if you had a sliding scale of rents such as you have just now condemned, are you aware of many discussions upon the subject?—I know of some owners that had reduced their rents in my immediate neighbourhood on the sliding scale.

11,257. And does it answer well?—I think they have had to reduce them more than the sliding scale.

11,258. More than in proportion to the changes in the prices of the produce?—Yes, more than the sliding scale.

Dairying.

11,259. About the prices of dairy produce, you told us that for the living of cows the farmer instead of receiving from 12*l*. to 15*l*. now receives from 10*l*. to 12*l*.?—It would be pretty good to receive from 10*l*. to 12*l*.; for instance, if I was letting mine I would not make more than 10*l*. now, although I have let them for 11*l*. I have managed them myself for 14 years.

11,260. Still you told us, I think, that the usual letting terms were at some time from 12*l*. to 15*l*., but now they are from 10*l*. to 12*l*.?—From 10*l*. to 12*l*. I should say on the best lands.

11,261. We were told by a witness the other day from a different part of the country that he did not think the prices of dairy produce, butter, cheese, and milk, had fallen materially at all; would that be the case in your part of the country?—No, certainly not.

11,262. The prices have fallen with you?—Yes, considerably.

11,263. Can you account for the difference—why have they fallen in one part of the country and not fallen in another part of the country?—There is a certain amount of dairy produce that has not fallen what I should call considerably; for instance, the dairyman would, I think, calculate something like a fourth for his pigs; those pigs have not decreased in value, the calves have not decreased very much in value, but butter and cheese have decreased in value.

11,264. How much?—I sold my butter at 15s. the dozen the whole season for several years, and I have only had 11s. now for two or three years.

11,265. And you used to have 15s.?—I have had 15s. for several years.

11,266. How long ago since you had 15s.?—That was 12 or 14 years ago; then I had 15s. a dozen for several years.

11,267. And you cannot account for how that great change should happen with you, and not with others?—I cannot account for that.

Rent; and prices.

11,268. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You said you knew instances where rent was fixed upon a sliding scale of prices?—Yes, they go on a sliding scale on the tithe.

11,269. Upon all stock or upon corn?—Only upon tithes—the average commutation.

11,270. Then it is not from year to year?—That is from year to year; as the tithes decrease the average is lowered, and if the tithes should rise they would raise the average.

Duty on wheat.

11,271. I think I understood you to say that wheat could not be grown to a profit under 40s. a quarter?—Yes.

11,272. That is your opinion?—I do not consider it would be grown at less than that on my land, and the very poorest of the land will not grow it at that price. On what I call wheat land—where they grow nothing scarcely but wheat—they cannot grow it at 40s. a quarter.

11,273. Not, and get rich over it?—Not, and pay their labour.

Dairying.

11,274. (*Mr. Elton.*) There is one further question I want to ask you to make clear what you have said; besides that wheat land of which we were speaking you also have of course very good grass land on which these cows are placed?—Yes.

11,275. Would you just tell us, please, the proportion, I am afraid I do not recollect, of good dairy bottom water meadow?—About two acres arable to one of pasture.

11,276. I mean the water meadow, you have got a certain amount of water meadow?—We have got a certain amount of water meadow.

11,277. I thought when your answer was taken down that the whole answer would seem to apply to the arable, and not to take any account of that. I understand that the value of the cow now would be not very different to what it was a good many years ago?—About 30s. or 2l. a cow.

11,278. Or 1l.?—More than that.

11,279. You have had 11l., you would have 10l. now?—No, I should not get 10l.

Oppressive agreements.

11,280. About the agreement, I understood it perfectly, but I do not know whether everyone did; were you speaking of complicated and oppressive agreements that you know of in the district of which you have been speaking?—No.

11,281. Not of your own particular district?—Not of my own district at all.

11,282. That, I presume, would be of a different kind?—Nothing that I say has regard to my own family, I am not speaking of it in that way. It is quite the contrary, I always looked at it in quite a different way.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. Arthur Wilson Fox, re-called and further examined.

11,283. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I think you have followed the evidence of Mr. W. Smith, M.P., who gave evidence here?—Yes, I was here when he gave evidence.

Farmers' Associations in Lancashire.

11,284. I should like to know how far the opinions of which he was the mouthpiece are held in the district that you visited; I think he spoke for Cheshire to a great extent and for a considerable part of Lancashire?—Yes. Cheshire I do not know, but as far as Lancashire is concerned I think I am quite correct in saying that those who hold views of a similar character to Mr. Smith belong to the association. It is the Federation of Tenant Farmers' Clubs; the Lancashire Federation of Farmers is another organisation altogether, to which Mr. Kay and Mr. Barlow belong.

11,285-7. It is one of several farmers' organisations in the county of Lancaster?—Yes, those clubs are federated together, and Mr. Smith is president of them. There is another large organisation called, as I have said, the Lancashire Federation of Farmers, which the president tells me numbers 700. The president is Mr. Kay. That also extends over a considerable part of north and over some other parts of Lancashire.

11,288. I gather from your report that they do not hold such extreme opinions with regard to land tenure as Mr. Smith's association?—No. They originally were one, and then there was a difference of opinion, and two separate organisations were formed.

11,289. Did you have representatives of each association before you at your meetings?—Yes, I met the Preston branch, and the Lancaster branch, and the Bolton branch of Mr. Smith's association separately on three separate days, and I met delegates from, I think, all the districts in the other Federation on another day, so that I practically interviewed all those associations.

11,290-1. Had you any discussion before you between the two organisations?—I had one meeting of farmers in a place called Poulton, and I found there was a body belonging to one of the associations there, and another body belonging to the other, so I had them both before me on the same day.

11,292. Was there a strong difference of opinion?—Yes; they held very opposite opinions, certainly, because one association thought that there was no remedy except that of a land court, and as they thought that that was the only remedy they could scarcely discuss or argue on any other basis.

11,293. Besides these two associations there is a Liverpool Farmers' Associations, is there not?—Yes, there is a strong club of farmers at Liverpool; they came up to give evidence before me.

11,294. They are more conservative in their views than the Federation, are they not?—Yes, they do not hold the same views as the Federation in any sense.

Capricious evictions.

11,295. Except from the representatives of Mr. Smith's Association, did you hear much said about capricious evictions and the insecurity of tenants' capital?—No, I did not; and I do not think as far as I can understand—and I went very carefully into this question—that there were capricious evictions. What I understand rather is that they were more in fear of capricious evictions; I did not understand, in fact I could not get instances, that capricious evictions had taken place. If I might draw your attention to page 6 of my report, you will see that I held a very large meeting at Lancaster in the Town Hall, the day before I left the district, and that Mr. Smith, M.P., stated that he "is of opinion that there are farmers who refrain from "giving evidence for fear of offending their landlords "or agents." Then he adds, "I believe in most cases "the fear is groundless, but still there is timidity." It seemed to be more their opinion that there was some fear, to what extent I cannot say.

11,296. Some fear of bad consequences owing to the opinions that they held?—Quite so.

11,297. But you did not find, except from the Tenant Farmers' Association, that there seemed to be much fear of capricious evictions?—No, I do not think so.

Farm buildings.

11,298. Do you say that in many parts of the district there is considerable need for much further outlay of money upon farm buildings, especially dairy farm buildings?—There is no doubt about it, that the dairies throughout the district compare unfavourably with the neighbouring counties such as Cheshire, where dairying is carried on. Dairying in Lancashire has been increasing considerably in the last ten years, and also cheese-making. At a time when there has been less money to lay out on buildings, there has been an increased demand for them.

11,299. Cheese-making is a very old-established industry in Cheshire, is it not?—Yes.

Permanent improvements.

11,300. Do you find that the tenants have effected improvements to any great extent in Lancashire?—

They do no permanent improvements. I believe in the neighbourhood of Liverpool—I did not go there, it was outside my district—on some large estates, the tenants do undertake those improvements sometimes, but not as a rule; the landlord will do them, but it is optional.

11,301. In the districts that you visited, do you think the tenants would undertake those improvements if they had absolute security?—I do not think they would; it is a district of small farmers. In the unions of Fylde and Garstang, it has always been the habit for landlords to do the improvements.

Drainage.

11,302. Should you make any distinction between buildings and drainage in this connexion?—A great deal of money has been spent on drainage all through the district. I do not think that the land is badly drained on the whole. A good deal of the land is subject to flooding, and unless large sums of money were laid out on embankments, it could not be prevented.

11,303–4. Do the tenants carry out their drainage themselves?—The tenants carry out a good deal of drainage; they generally find the labour, the landlord finding the tiles. On some of the large estates the landlords do all the drainage, and then the labour is done by the farmer.

Capricious evictions.

11,305. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) One word as regards the feeling of the members of the Farmers' Associations down there; was it explained to you why they should fear, or was there any cause of fear, say, politically?—I do not think there was any cause for fear, I thought Mr. William Smith answered that question when he said that he thought the fear was groundless. I may say that I held a number of public meetings, and I asked for evidence of capricious eviction, but I think I only got the three or four cases which I have stated in my report. There were four cases of arbitrary dismissal of farmers mentioned to me. One of those was a case in which the witness refused to give evidence before me, and stated that he would give it here, so that I know nothing about that. In another case the farmer would not give the name of the landlord; of course I took no note of that, because I could not take an *ex parte* statement of that description; and the other case was mentioned to me in public and the landlord's name given. The tenant said that he was sent away from his farm for attending a meeting of the Tenant Farmers' Association. The land agent came before me and stated publicly that it was because the tenant had never paid his rent punctually, and because of other matters he did not wish to disclose. The fourth case was that of a farmer who said that he was sent away from his farm for signing a request that fewer rabbits should be kept on that farm.

11,306 It is all in your report. I only wanted to know whether you wanted to say anything besides what appears in your report?—No; those were the four cases which were brought before me.

Farm buildings.

11,307. Are we to understand from what you have said to-day in answer to the question of Lord Cobham, that the state of the farm-houses and buildings generally, in the district you went through, would compare favourably with other districts in the Kingdom, after making allowance for the change in the last 10 years, of those farms being turned into dairy farms, and therefore not having sufficient accommodation for dairying? Is that so?—I should say that that is so generally. On some of those large estates the expenditure has been, I may say, enormous; but in some parts of the Fylde district, which as you know is a peat district, and as one is driving, looks like the west coast of Ireland, some of the farm houses on the small properties, that is to say, the small farm holdings, which run to perhaps 50 or 60 acres of land, I think are bad. All round the direction of Pilling you have conditions which you seldom find in England, they are so bad; but those are exceptional.

11,308. They are small holdings, are they not?—They are rented, they are not freehold. There are certain parts of that district, the peat district, where the farm buildings are distinctly bad. But taking them as a whole, I do not think you could say that they compare unfavourably with other districts.

Cottages.

11,309. As regards the cottages, what would you say?—In the first place, I should say there are not a great many cottages, because the majority of the labourers are hired into the farm houses. There are some bad cottages, but I think, on the whole, they are fair. Of course on some of the big estates they are very good; but I do not think it is a district of which you could say that the cottages are bad, as you could of some parts of the country, in the eastern counties for instance.

High rents.

11,310. Is there any complaint of the highness of the rents?—I think the majority of the farmers are complaining at the present time that they have not had a sufficient reduction in rent. I think the Liverpool farmers are the only body of men who do not complain.

11,311. You gathered generally that if a farm was to be let, there were applicants for it?—Certainly, for farms of all sizes; there is not a farm unlet in the district.

11,312. (*Chairman.*) Were those applications at the old rent?—The applications were at the present rent.

Existence of depression.

11,313. (*Mr. Giffen.*) In what sense is there agricultural depression in that part of the country?—The outward and visible sign of agricultural depression is rather difficult to state; the land agents say that the land has not gone back, with few exceptions (although the farmers take a contrary view) and that the farms will let easily. But the farmers say that they are making no money, and I got evidence from manure merchants and provender merchants that they are selling much less manure and provender, and are finding it very difficult to get their money in; and also I got evidence from cattle salesmen to say that they cannot get money. They ask for ready money since the depression, and they will not deal on credit.

11,314. I daresay the landlords are getting their money?—The landlords are all getting their money.

11,315. It seems to me a peculiar state of things that the landlord should be able to get his money and that nobody else should be able to do so?—I think that the north country farmers will always pay their rent; that is a matter of honour with them. They would do anything rather than not pay the rent; they would borrow the money to pay it.

11,316. Why should they compete for the privilege of paying rent which they cannot afford?—The evidence there is, that they have not acutely felt the agricultural depression until the last three or four years, and no doubt they think that times will mend.

11,317. They have felt it during the last three or four years, have they not?—Yes, during the last three or four years.

11,318. At any rate for the last two years perhaps?—For the last two years; perhaps the last three years.

11,319. Is that partly due to the seasons?—No; it is chiefly from the drop in the prices of cattle; they came down with a run; they dropped 30 or 40 per cent. I do not think that they suffered much from seasons.

11,320. That applies to farmers who keep stock, and not to dairy farmers so much, does it not?—That is the case. Cheese and butter are not paying quite so well as they did; in the last 18 months a number of men who formerly made cheese and butter have given it up for selling milk. The milk trade is increasing very largely.

11,321. But you think there are farms where they grow produce for the cattle, and that if the prices have gone down very much they cannot hold on, except at a reduced rent?—That is the case.

Competition for farms.

11,322. Especially when we hear that in other parts of the country there are farms going a-begging. Why should they compete for farms in Lancashire when farms are going begging in other parts of the country, unless it is the case that it pays them to do it in Lancashire?—One would think that would be the case. One is loth to believe them to be unbusinesslike, and to bid higher rent than they can pay.

Labour of farmers with families.

11,323. But you cannot throw any light on that, beyond what is contained in this Report?—No. There is one point I should like to mention. It is a complaint by the farmers who have no families, that the farmers with families are in a position to bid a higher rent, because they get their sons and daughters to work for nothing, and so, when they bid for the farm, they have not to take the labour into consideration.

11,324. But the sons do not work for nothing. If they are not paid in cash, they are in kind?—They get their clothes and food.

11,325. And something besides, I presume?—I suppose when they want money they get some given them.

11,326. You state in one part of your report that you have a difficulty in arriving at the definition of fixity of tenure?—Yes.

Fixity of tenure. Fair rent.

11,327. Do not you find a similar difficulty with regard to the definition of fair rent?—Yes, I asked both the Lancashire Associations to tell me what they meant by a fair rent, and the Federation of Farmers' Associations said that a fair rent would be 30 per cent. less than they paid; and the other association, Mr. Smith's Association, thought that a fair rent would mean a reduction of 25 per cent. to meet the times.

11,328. But they gave you no definition which would be a guide for a county court judge in settling a fair rent?—None.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

11,329. (*Mr. Clay.*) With regard to your visit to that country district, what was the general opinion there of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—The farmers in that district have practically no experience of it; it has been very little put into operation.

11,330. Will you tell us the reason why?—Well, they have got a wholesome or unwholesome fear of the law. They are afraid of embarking in expenses, and they think they might be worse off. The Act is very seldom put into operation in the district.

11,331. Is it not put into operation owing to the fear of the expense?—Yes, the fear of a contested claim. There have been very few cases. They complained of the expense, and I tried to get some instances to show how much those cases had cost, but I only got one or two in the whole district.

11,332. There seems to have been an able estate manager, Mr. Jacob Fair, who gave you some opinion about the Agricultural Holdings Act. He said, "The "Act is practically inoperative in Lancashire, chiefly "on account of the expense of procedure"?—Yes.

11,333. Do they find the procedure so expensive?—That is what he said. But I rather think they condemned the Act there before they tried it.

Payment of compensation by private agreement.

11,334. Had tenant farmers any other compensation given them by arrangements through their landlords?—Yes, there are a great many estates where definite arrangements were made, and which I put in my Appendix at pages 36 to 43.

11,335. Do you consider that they were fair and reasonable arrangements?—They have got this disadvantage about them, that in those cases I find the landlords saying that they do not claim for dilapidations All this evidence which I have given here is from the landlords, you will see it on page 40. I will take the first name. It is that of Mr. Laurence Rawstorne, of Hutton Hall, Preston. He puts out a scale, and he says, "I have never received a farthing "for dilapidations." I do not know that that scale is rather lower than arbitrators would give, but at any rate the tenants have got the benefit of getting that compensation without cost, and without any counterclaim made against them.

11,336. Do you fancy that the compensation was full and reasonable?—The tenants on some of the large estates where this same agreement is in operation, told me they were perfectly satisfied with it. It was an agreement drawn up by some leading farmers, and leading land agents in North Lancashire; and representatives of all the large estates near Liverpool came before me on a certain day, and I asked them whether the agreement was fair and reasonable, and whether they were perfectly satisfied with it, and they said they were.

11,337. You know something about the Agricultural Holdings Act in connection with compensation. For instance, what number of years does it take for lime to become exhausted?—They say it varies from about 20 to five years. In the schedule which the Federation of Farmers' Associations have drawn up for compensation I think they allowed 14 years, and so I presume that lime does not last so long in Lancashire as in some parts of Northumberland, for instance.

11,338. I think you referred to the Holker Estate on page 41. I see what they consider fair and reasonable for lime on arable land is four years?—That is so. Then on permanent pasture it is 12 years that they allow.

11,339. We are talking of arable land just now. Do you think that the tenant farmer will bring capital in the shape of lime and only get compensation for four years; do you think that is fair and reasonable?—I do not know what the soil is on the Holker Estate. I should not like to say that it is unreasonable without knowing that.

11,340. But you have some idea of the Holker Estate?—I have not been to the Holker Estate.

11,341. At any rate, you cannot say that it would encourage a tenant to lay lime if it is to be exhausted in four years at the expense that they go to now?—On that I would say that it lasts longer in Northumberland. I have never been on the Holker property.

11,342. How long do you say it lasts in Northumberland?—As long as 20 years in some cases, but only five years in other parts of Northumberland.

11,343. There is another thing on the Holker Estate which we all know something of, namely, linseed cakes and cotton cakes. Now they seem to only allow one-sixth?—Yes.

11,344. Do you think that is sufficient?—The tenants think so.

11,345. Comparing these private arrangements with the arrangements under the Agricultural Holdings Act, do you think that it in any way encourages them to keep up the increase of fertility?—A great many men prefer private arrangements to a contested claim. What Mr. Drewry says here is this: no compensation for dilapidations has ever been claimed by the landlord, so those men who are under this ageement pay nothing for dilapidations, whatever those dilapidations might be.

11,346. Would not it be well, to put things on a proper basis, to allow the landlord to claim for dilapidations and to allow the tenant to claim for a fair and reasonable sum for his having increased the fertility of the soil?—Yes. I certainly think that the farmers in Lancashire would like to see the Agricultural Holdings Act amended, and it is their desire to see it amended.

The marking of foreign meat.

11,347. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) On page 29 you say there is one suggestion upon which all are agreed, whether landlords or tenants, and that is the labelling of foreign meat. Did you get from these men, who are no doubt very practical fellows, any suggestion as to how they would carry that out at all?—No. It was thought a great difficulty; some suggested that a butcher should take out a licence so that people should know that he was a dealer in foreign meat, others thought that the butcher ought to sell foreign meat in a separate establishment, or a separate part of the shop, and have it distinctly stated; and some people, again, thought if they could introduce a Bill with a very heavy penalty, so that it should be worth no one's while to commit a fraud of that sort, it would be of service.

11,348. Could they give any definition at all as to what they would consider to be foreign meat?—Yes; all meat that was killed on landing, or all imported dead meat. Of course there is a difficulty as to foreign meat, because live stock might be brought to England and fed here.

11,349. That is what I was going to ask you about. If those restrictions were taken off and those cattle were finished off at home, after what lapse of time do they become home meat, or how long do they continue to be foreign meat?—Those men consider that it should be meat killed on landing or some killed on the other side and brought across.

11,350. Dead meat, or slaughtered at the port of debarkation they mean?—Yes. I apprehend if they kept cattle here for six months or a year after being landed they could not trace the foreign origin.

11,351. So that virtually it would come to be of very little good to the consumer if these bullocks were landed and taken to a man's place and finished off in four weeks and then sold as home meat—you do not see how much good would result to the consumer?—I think the Lancashire farmers hope that the restrictions will continue in force.

Existence of depression.

11,352. (*Mr. Little.*) The result of your inquiry appears to be that there is no very great depression in the Garstang division?—Well, it is not that there is no depression, but that it has not lasted long enough for it to become very apparent.

Conditions of farming.

11,353. They farm under particularly good conditions?—They farm under as good conditions as any farmers in England, I should think.

11,354. They have good markets and a very large population close at hand, and they get their manures very cheaply?—Yes.

11,355. And they are not dependent upon the growth of corn?—They have very little corn.

11,356. And the produce that they have to sell has not declined in value as in the East of England or the arable parts of England generally?—Yes, and you might add that there is more opportunity for changing the system of farming there.

11,357. In what way?—In the way of supplying those big towns with vegetables and milk and eggs and going in for market gardening.

Farm buildings.

11,358. The inadequacy of the buildings that you spoke of is partly the consequence of the change in the system of farming?—To a considerable extent.

11,359. You gave instances of very large sums having been spent in buildings within the last 20 or 30 years?—Yes, the big estates in Lancashire which are owned by men with such large capital as they have are as well equipped with buildings as any part of England, I think.

Farmers' Associations in Lancashire.

Differences of opinion.

11,360. With regard to the two rival associations of farmers and agriculturists in Lancashire, what is the cardinal difference between them?—The difference is this, that Mr. Smith's Association desires a court which is to interfere with all contracts between landlord and tenant, or rather to which either landlord or tenant could appeal as to questions of rent or conditions of tenancy, and the other association say that there must be freedom of contract.

11,361. Do they desire some alteration in the law with regard to compensation for tenants' improvements?—Yes, both of them do that.

11,362. Do they find fault with the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

11,363. What particular amendment has there been proposed by either of those associations or by the farmers generally?—Take the farmers. I do not think that I received any suggestions from farmers. They condemned it, but made no suggestions. Now the Tenant Farmers' Association, that is Mr. Smith's association, suggest that the Land Court should settle all questions under the Agricultural Holdings Act as regards compensation, and that there should be two assessors, as was stated the other day, and the county court judge should be the arbitrator. Well, then, Mr. Kay's association—the Federation of Farmers' Associations—suggests that there should be a fixed scale for all these improvements—a fixed scale, so that, as they said, any child could add up for himself exactly the amount he was entitled to. And then, of course, there would be the counterclaim. I find this is the feeling amongst the farmers, that when they put money in the soil, they would like to know how much they are going to get out of it without waiting for the arbitrator to tell them.

11,364. I suppose an Act of Parliament would have to lay down an uniform scale of compensation for the whole country?—That is the point which is raised against this proposal. Mr. Kay's proposal is that there should be a board of arbitrators nominated by the county councils, both tenant farmers and agents, and that the contending parties should each choose one of those men, and then the matter would go to arbitration. But Mr. Kay goes further than the present Agricultural Holdings Act as to first-class improvements. They urge that when a landlord refuses to do one of those first-class improvements they can call in the arbitrators, and if the arbitrators say that the improvements are necessary for the purpose of the farmer carrying on his business, then the improvements are to be carried out and the landlord will have to pay at the end of the tenancy.

11,365. But to return to the question of compensation. You said that the system of arbitration for ascertaining the amount is a different thing to a scale laid down for the whole country?—Yes. Then for feeding stuffs, manures, and so on, Mr. Kay says a fixed scale.

11,366. For the whole country, do you mean?—Yes, incorporated in an Act of Parliament.

Payment of compensation by private agreement.

11,367. You have given in your report several instances of substituted agreements?—Yes.

11,368. Those are agreements which can be set aside now—if proved unfair or unreasonable at the time of making them?—Yes.

11,369. But do you not find that farmers generally prefer a fixed sum by agreement to an indefinite sum arrived at by arbitration?—Yes, that is the reason why Mr. Kay advanced this fixed scale—because there is this feeling among the farmers—they like to know where they are.

Reduction in rent.

11,370. Mr. Smith spoke of reductions of rents, and he said that on some estates no practical reduction had been made. Do you find that to be the case?—Well, I have set out the reductions of rent at some length, and I may say that there have not been many permanent reductions in Lancashire, and I do not think they have been asked for until lately; but now there is a feeling that the reductions have not been sufficient.

11,371. In your report the per-centage by which rent is reduced does not give a fair idea of the present rent or whether the present rent is a fair rent or not?—I have set out on page 18 the rent on some estates of large and small farms, and in the heart of the district, which I thought would be fair samples; and I have given the farms under 100 acres on these estates and the farms over 100 acres, and I have given the rent per acre there.

11,372. Yes; but I meant if a rent was a high rent a reduction of 25 per cent. may not mean more than in a case where the rent was moderate and the reduction was only 10 per cent.?—Yes.

11,373. Therefore you must know whether there had been a high rent or a moderate rent to begin with, and when it was fixed whether it was raised at some former period?—Yes.

11,374. And the instances which Mr. Smith gave where there is no permanent reduction made is given on page 55, where it is said that the property in question was valued in 1826 and there has been no re-valuation since?—That is the Holker Estate.

11,375. If no permanent reduction has been made, at any rate there has been no permanent addition?—No. Of course in a case like that the rents would probably be very low, because in the years when Lancashire was flourishing, between 1865 and 1875, if the rents were not raised in those days the rents fixed before then would be low ones. There was a great tide of prosperity between 1865 and 1875.

Labour of farmers with families.

11,376. With regard to one other point. Mr. Giffen spoke of the small farmers whose families work, and he said that the families were paid, if not in money, then in kind. But is it not the fact that they are paid very little indeed in proportion to the labourers who are hired?—Yes; they are in a much worse position; they get no wages. If a farmer's son wants to go into a town to amuse himself I have no doubt that he gets something from his father to go with, and also something to pay for his tobacco and other trifles.

11,377. The farm servants hired into a farm house and doing the same work as the farmer's son would get in Garstang 20*l.* a year wages at least, would he not?—Yes; he would get that.

11,378. And the son working on the farm would only get the same keep as the farm servant with very little wages?—That is all.

11,379. They would get the same food as the farm servants?—Yes.

11,380. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Why does not the son become a farm servant?—He is more independent at home.

11,381. He does not do the same work, is that the point?—I should think they do more.

11,382. (*Mr. Everett.*) I think at Garstang you met with a gentleman of the name of Simpson?—I regret I did not meet him, but I know all about him.

11,383. He expressed an opinion, a very strong opinion, that the currency causes were the main root of the present agricultural difficulties?—Yes; he holds strong opinions about that.

11,384. Would he probably be willing to give evidence upon that point?—He would be a very good witness.

11,385. Is he a man standing well in the district?—Yes.

Reduced price of cattle.

11,386. (*Chairman.*) Will you turn to page 35 of your report, in the appendix; at page 35 Mr. Collinson gives a table showing the price which he received for cattle, and lambs, and cheese; and from those prices it would appear that it is only within the last two years—1892 and 1893—there has been any great reduction in the price of cattle?—That is so.

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11,387. Has that been due to the seasons, to want of produce in the south and centre of England, that cattle has been forced into the market, and therefore the prices have fallen very much?—It was only last year that that was the case. The Lancashire people were hoping and expecting this last year to be able to send their cattle to Scotland on account of the restrictions on foreign cattle. Scotland would then they thought have to draw on Lancashire; but instead of that, as I notice in my colleagues report on Somersetshire, he states that in some dairy farms there was only one-fourth of the hay that they had in other years, and the result of that in Lancashire was that all the Somersetshire and Devonshire cattle were going to Scotland instead of the Lancashire cattle.

11,388. Did not that reduce the price?—Certainly in 1893.

11,389. In 1892 was not there some special cause for the reduction in the price of cattle owing to the bad seasons in the south of England? In the south of England it was a very wet season in 1892? I do not think that that was so much the case; there is a very large number of foreign cattle and foreign meat brought into Liverpool, and it is increasing, and they attribute the reduction to that.

11,390. Now up to 1892 there was no considerable reduction in the prices?—The great reduction has occurred in the last three years.

11,391. Therefore the depression, so far as it arises from the change in the price of cattle in Lancashire, has occurred only since 1891, 1892, and 1893?—Yes, during the last three or four years.

Price of cheese.

11,392. And the same with the price of lambs. If you look at 1880 you will see that the price was 1*l*. 8*s*. and in 1891, 1*l*. 7*s*. 6*d*. Of course there have been variations in the interval, but apparently there has been no very great reduction. Well, then, we come to the price of cheese, and you will observe that the price of cheese in 1880 and 1881 was 60*s*., and slightly over; and in 1891 and 1892 it was 55*s*.?—Yes.

The coal strike.

11,393. Showing no very great reduction; about 10 per cent.?—That is all. I think perhaps I might state what I have not stated in my report, that the Lancashire farmers felt the coal strike a good deal. I learnt that after I left the district. The strike went on for some time and the miners who usually eat a good deal of meat and cheese did not do so during the strike, and that affected the farmers a good deal at the close of last year.

11,394. That tended to reduce the price by the decreased consumption; that affected 1893?—Yes.

11,395. There appeared to be exceptional causes at work both in respect of bad seasons and the strike?—Yes, there is no doubt that both those causes, particularly the former, affected the Lancashire farmers last year.

11,396. Have you made any inquiries as to the price of milk?—No, the price of milk has not fallen; they are going in for milk more and more.

Wheat growing.

11,397. Of course I presume the amount of corn and wheat grown in Lancashire has never been very considerable?—That need hardly be taken into account in my district.

11,398. But when the statistics say the corn crops, does that mean oats and barley?—Yes. Straw has been sold very well this last year.

11,399. But the corn crops, are they oats and barley, or what?—Yes, oats and barley.

11,400. But not wheat?—Very little wheat indeed.

11,401. And apparently the proportion of corn crops even in 1882 is not inconsiderable for the whole of Lancashire; you will see it on page 7?—Yes.

11,402. The acreage of corn crops was not inconsiderable even in 1882?—No.

11,403. And apparently the total amount has remained stationary?—Yes.

11,404. On the other hand there has been a very large increase apparently of cultivated ground of some kind?—Of course the rotation grasses have increased.

Farmers' accounts.

11,405. Have you obtained balance sheets of any farmers?—No, that is quite impossible in North Lancashire.

11,406. Why?—Because they do not keep them. I sent out 80 circulars to farmers who were more likely than other men to keep accounts, because they were substantial farmers in the districts. I asked on all hands for that information, and I was told that practically no man in North Lancashire ever kept accounts.

11,407. Therefore there are no definite figures showing the profit and loss of the successive years?—None. I was corroborated by the Income Tax Commissioners and income tax collectors, and I only found three men who did keep accounts.

11,408. Did you ascertain from the income-tax collectors whether the farmers as a rule, or in any considerable number, have availed themselves of the opportunities of being assessed for their income-tax upon their actual profits?—None.

11,409. Do you think we may deduce from that that the profits generally have been more than half their rent?—I do not think so. I held a meeting of some large farmers, they were as large farmers as you will find in that part, and they said that owing to the farmers not keeping accounts they were unable to take that course, and that is the reason they gave; they were all big farmers. You will see that on page 70.

11,410. Even big farmers do not keep accounts, so that they cannot avail themselves of the offers which the State has made to them to pay on their actual profits?—No.

11,411. Does that not seem to show that their profit has been more than half the rent?—I do not think so.

11,412. (*Mr. Giffen.*) What difficulties have the farmers in making up an account?—They would find it difficult. Of course a great number of these men have been labourers, or their fathers were labourers before them, and in the heart of that district you cannot judge them by the same standard as many farmers in other districts; they are men with not much intellectual training; they know their own business in farming, but they are not well educated comparing them with farmers elsewhere.

11,413. (*Chairman.*) You spoke of the number of people who were ready to take farms?—There is not a farm to let.

Advantages to incoming tenants.

11,414. Any farmer coming in now and offering for a farm would come in under advantageous terms, would he not?—He would stock his farm cheaply.

11,415. The price of milk has not been reduced, and the price of cheese has been only slightly reduced, therefore would not he be in a favourable position as compared with what he might have been a few years ago?—Yes; if he was going to carry on a dairy business.

Farmers' expenditure and profits.

11,416. If you turn again to page 33 you will see that several illustrations are given of the expenses of certain farmers in the Garstang Union?—That is as near as I could get them.

11,417. They vary considerably. Three farmers pay a little over 2*l*. an acre in their expenditure including their rent; and others vary from 4*l*. 10*s*. to 4*l*. 16*s*. and 6*l*. 13*s*.?—Yes.

11,418. Did you make any inquiries as to which of those farmers make the best profits?—None of these farmers. I know several of them well, and they consider that they are making no profits.

11,419. No profits at all?—I do not think any of them do make a profit.

11,420. Some of them seem to be dairy farmers selling milk largely?—Yes.

11,421. Do you think that they do not make any profit?—It is very difficult to tell. All these men keep large families, at least most of them do, their sons and daughters all live out of the farm, and they only know what they put by in the bank at the end of the year, and that is the only account they keep, and if they have not saved something at the end of the year then they have done badly.

11,422. At all events they have lived, they and their families on the farm?—Yes, they have lived—one of those farmers told me that for the last three or four years he had been making nothing.

11,423. But still it would seem important to ascertain which of them would do best—some made very large outlays in provender and manure as compared with the others.

11,424. One man spends 150*l*. in artificial manure, whereas another man spends only 64*l*.?—And that man spending 150*l*. is one of the best farmers in the district, Mr. Stuart.

11,425. Do you think that he makes no profit?—Well, I cannot say.

11,426. He was not satisfied?—I think he said that he was not losing money; but his brother-in-law, Mr. Pearson, who is one of the best farmers in the district, said that he was not making any money for three or four years.

11,427. Not enough?—Not any.

11,428. (*Mr. Little.*) Are those rough estimates?—The difficulty of producing the receipts is very great in North Lancashire, and those figures are given in round numbers; sometimes out of doors; but I asked for receipts in some cases, and they were not easy to get.

11,429. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Dealing with the same district, on pages 61 and 62, you will find the expenditure in one case 7*l.* 8*s.* 2*d.* per acre, in another case 7*l.* 1*s.* 8*d.* per acre, and in another case 4*l.* 16*s.* 9*d.*?—Quite so.

High farming and low farming compared.

11,430. (*Chairman.*) On the farms illustrated at page 32 the expenditure upon three of them has been only at the rate of 2*l.* per acre?—Yes.

11,431. Including the rent; therefore, that would tend to show that the farm is carried on in a very spare manner?—Yes, one or two of those are so carried on.

11,432. It is important to know whether in that country the farm pays better which is farmed highly and with a large expenditure on manure and so forth?—It does, there is no doubt about that, and that is the reason I have given these instances at length of those men who have done well whose evidence is more definite, and these men do keep accounts, although I was not at liberty to publish them.

11,433. Would you not rather conclude that by spending plenty of money upon the farm in this dairy district, and by keeping accurate accounts so that they may know where they are, it is possible for farmers to make a fair profit?—Of course, these instances really strike one very forcibly; they are remarkable instances, and one would say that if these men can do this others may, on page 61 there is the evidence of a farmer in the Fylde District, and he says: "I am absolutely satisfied with the money I am making."

11,434. And that is a farmer who farms very high in proportion to his acreage?—Yes.

11,435. He is the highest in the expenditure, 7*l.* 8*s.* 2*d.* per acre?—Yes. Then on page 62, in the right hand column, beginning in August 1892, there is a very remarkable instance of a man who bought land in August 1892, and says it will pay well.

11,436. (*Mr. Little.*) He says: "In August 1892 I bought the 120-acre farm I now rent," does he mean the farm he now occupies?—No, he rents it.

11,437. (*Chairman.*) Whose case is that?—Mr. Pearson's.

11,438. He says: "I bought the 120-acre farm I now rent?"—Well, he sold it again within a week; he bought it and sold it and now rents it; he is a man who spends money, and is doing a lot of work on the farm.

11,439. He spends a very large sum of money?—A very large sum of money.

11,440. Has he got a lease of it?—Yes, he has got a lease for 14 years, the first three years rent free and afterwards 14*s.* per acre tithe free. Now that land had been waterlogged for nearly 20 years, and then after this expense he says: "On this land this year I have grown 72 tons of potatoes, over 4,000 loads, and 20 acres of corn and clover. I expect to recoup myself on my outlay in two years." Well, that is a good illustration of not only a considerable sum being spent yearly upon linseed cake and manures and so forth, but also large sums on improvements by the tenant under a lease. Perhaps I might draw the attention of the Commission to the next man, a small farmer with eleven children; he has got a farm of 63 acres, and he says: "Throughout all this agricultural depression I have farmed on lines which have proved successful. I am one of those men who are in favour of high farming." And then he states how he did it and changed his system of farming.

11,441. Now the question is whether the examples of these two men could not be followed very much more largely by others?—Here are instances of two large farmers and one small man who have been successful within the last two years.

11,442. By a large expenditure of money?—And changing their system of farming to some extent.

11,443. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Would you read the last paragraph on page 63 C. 3?—He has got eleven children, and he says, "I and my family work from "6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and besides that often have a good "deal of night work among cattle. The girls and boys "are simply working for their meat and clothes. "Sometimes I put a sheep away for them, so that they "may be their own managers in buying clothes." That shows the conditions under which the man works.

Reduction in number of farmers.

11,444. (*Chairman.*) Now will you turn again to the bottom of page 34. You will see the number of farmers and labourers in Lancashire at each decennial period from 1861 to 1891. From that it appears that the number of farmers has been very largely reduced?—Yes.

11,445. In 1861 it was 16,000; in 1871 it was 16,000; in 1881 it was 14,800; and in 1891, it was 13,200; showing a reduction of 1200 in the decennial period from 1871 to 1881; and of 1600 from 1881 to 1891. Do you know what that is due to?—No, I do not. I found no farmhouses in the district which I was in showing that there had been any consolidation of farms; in fact it rather tends in the other direction.

11,446. It is a district for small farms. I see that in the Garstang Union, out of 918 farms, 564 are under 50 acres; and in the Fylde Union, out of 599 farms, 306 are under 50 acres?—Yes.

11,447. (*Mr. Little.*) The Census returns of 1871 included all superannuated persons belonging to the class, and in 1881 they did not, and the Census Commissioners call attention to the decrease in those classes, and say that the superannuated persons were enumerated in 1861 and 1871, but not in 1881 and 1891?—Among the farmers, do you mean? Is that in the Census Tables?

11,448. You will find it in the 1881 report of the Census Commission?—I did not read the report.

11,449. They give that explanation in the general report of 1881. They say that it does not make above 2 per cent. difference, but it does count for something?—I see.

11,450. (*Chairman.*) It accounts for something, but only 2 per cent. This is a reduction far beyond that; it amounts to nearer 10 per cent. than 2 per cent.?—Yes.

11,451. You have seen nothing in the district that you were in which at all accounts for that?—Certainly not.

Reduced number of labourers.

11,452. If you look down the figures you will see that the number of agricultural labourers has been largely decreased, apparently most largely between the periods 1861 and 1871, when you stated there was great prosperity?—Yes, but I think they went to the towns to get the high wages.

11,453. But that would seem to indicate that that is not the only test of the prosperity of the district. The reduction was from 39,000 in 1861 to 29,000 in 1871; that is a reduction of 10 per cent. From 1871 to 1881 it was reduced by 3,000, and from 1881 to 1891 by about 2,000. Therefore the reduction between 1881 and 1891 which was the period when there had been depression at all in Lancashire, the reduction has been least?—Yes; the population of the Garstang Union has remained fairly stationary within the last 10 years.

11,454. And apparently that has not been coincident with the reduction of the acreage under corn?—No.

11,455. Because the acreage under corn crops has remained the same?—Quite so.

Economy of labour.

11,456. It would be due to improved methods which has enabled them to dispense with the same amount of labour, I suppose?—Or economy in their labour bill. But there is the agents' evidence, which is almost unanimous, that the land has not deteriorated. A great many of the farmers say it has, but the agents, except one or two, say that it has not, and Lord Sefton's agent says that he thinks it has distinctly improved on their property.

Sale of cattle by live-weight.

11,457. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Did you hear any expression of opinion as to the advantage or disadvantage of both fat and store cattle and sheep being sold by weight?—They send everything to auction marts now;

Mr. A. W. Fox.

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they do not weigh them. A great many of the farmers think that their judgment is as good as the butchers. I heard the question discussed a good deal. Some men thought it would be much better to have it weighed, but I think the opinion of the farmers generally is that they are as good judges as the butchers.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. J. Turner.

Mr. JABEZ TURNER called and examined.

11,458. (*Mr. Little.*) As we know, you are one of the Assistant Commissioners, and you were appointed to report upon the Frome District of Somerset?—Yes.

11,459. That was the first district that you visited?—Yes.

11,460. Your attention was chiefly confined to one particular portion of the county?—Yes, the neighbourhood of Frome.

Characteristics of district.

11,461. What is the description of agriculture chiefly pursued there?—In the immediate neighbourhood of Frome on the one side it is almost entirely pastoral farming laid down to dairy purposes, and on the other, in a more or less degree, to arable.

11,462. Of what description is the soil?—The soil in the dairy district is of a very good description of reddish loam, and the grass land is very good. That particularly applies to the first district.

11,463. And with regard to the hills what is it there?—It is not a specially hilly district in the immediate neighbourhood of Frome.

11,464. Does not your district include high-lying land on the lias?—Not that portion of it.

Deficient produce.

11,465. What was the general condition of the farms in the neighbourhood?—The farms range from 50 to 200 acres, and they were principally devoted to cheese making, not a great quantity of butter, and without any exception they all complained very considerably of the returns, and stated that they were getting no profit.

11,466. Would their complaint be partly on account of the deficient yield of produce and partly the deficient prices?—Exactly so, particularly with regard to the deficient yield of produce on account of the extreme drought of the early part of the season.

11,467. That would be the consequence of one extraordinary season?—Yes, they complained of the two last years, but especially this last year.

11,468. Did they complain of any great decrease in the value of their produce?—A certain amount of decrease but not very considerable, more particularly in the yield.

Losses from farming.

11,469. Were you able to measure the effects of this severe depression in the production?—Well, I found a complaint all over the country that farming was carried on, even when carried on most carefully, without a commensurate return, without a profit absolutely. One particular case is given in my report on page 7. You will observe the case of one gentleman who kept 70 cows on 200 acres of land.

11,470. He complains of having lost money?—Yes.

11,471. (*Chairman.*) He complains of losses during the last two years?—Generally in the last two years, but especially in the last year.

11,472. (*Mr. Little.*) Then the loss has been particularly during the recent years?—Yes.

11,473. And has it shown itself in some farms being untenanted?—There are no farms untenanted in the immediate neighbourhood.

Reduction in rents.

11,474. There are considerable reductions of rent?—Yes.

11,475. Are they abatements or reductions?—Both; sometimes reductions and abatements upon the reductions.

Demand for farms.

11,476. Are there many farms to let at the present time?—Very few at present.

11,477. There is still a demand for the farms?—Yes. I suppose the farmers hope for a turn in the seasons, or a better time.

Agreements.

11,478. Did the farmers with whom you communicated complain of the conditions under which they hired their land?—Not particularly, they were mostly satisfied with the agreements under which they held.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

11,479. Did you find the Agricultural Holdings Act the subject of complaint?—In the more northern districts on the arable farming there was considerable complaint with regard to it.

Claims and counter claims.

11,480. What was the nature of the complaint?—Particularly with regard to the notice required to be given by the tenant, and the additional notice required by the landlord for his counter-claim, the tenants alleging that the time allowed to the farmer to make his counter-claim gave him an undue advantage.

11,481. The landlord has now two months before the termination of the tenancy, and within 14 days after the determination of the tenancy, to make his claim?—Yes, after the expiration of the tenancy.

11,482. Do you suppose that the tenants desire that the claims should be made simultaneously?—They do not wish them to be made simultaneously, but a very much shorter period allowed between the two claims being made.

11,483. Did they object to a landlord making a claim under any circumstances?—No.

11,484. But the point of the complaint was there being so long a period?—Yes; that the landlord had too long a period, and the farm had time within the two periods to deteriorate by the apparent growth of weeds deteriorating the apparent condition.

11,485. After the tenancy had terminated?—Yes.

11,486. The growth of annual weeds I presume in the stubbles?—Yes.

11,487. Are the tenancies generally at Michaelmas?—No, Lady-day, spring tenancies.

11,488. We must then suppose the land to be untouched. If a tenant enters upon a Lady-day farm, he would cultivate at once?—Yes, a portion of it of course would be cultivated; but that was the statement.

11,489. After a farm has gone out of their possession it may put on an appearance of foulness, for which the landlord may make a claim?—Yes.

11,490. I suppose they think that a valuer would be deceived by that into giving compensation?—I suppose so.

11,491. At any rate the fear of the counter-claim by the landlord is felt or expressed by the tenants?—It is expressed very much.

11,492. Were there any other amendments of the Act suggested?—It has been suggested in that direction because, as I at any rate understood, the Act was practically inoperative through not being called into existence.

Agreements.

11,493. Do you know whether agreements have been substituted for the Act?—In many instances.

11,494. Are they not considered satisfactory?—They are considered satisfactory.

11,495. The tenants prefer them to the Act?—The tenants prefer them to the Act.

11,496. They prefer making their own bargain to the uncertainty of an arbitration?—Yes, because they have the opportunity if the agreement be not equal to the provisions of the Act of falling back upon the Act.

11,497. (*Chairman.*) But if they do not come to an amicable arrangement upon their own agreements when a change of tenure takes place they must go to law equally as they have to go to law under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—They can then claim under the Act. If the private arrangement is not equal to the provisions of the Act the Act would override the agreement.

11,498. (*Mr. Little.*) Was there any complaint as to the cost of procedure under the Act or was it generally as to procedure?—I could not say that there was, because there was not a case brought before my notice in which it had been contested.

11,499. The Act being inoperative?—Yes.

Rates.

11,500. What other subjects of complaint did you find amongst the farmers?—The incidence of local taxation was one that was particularly mentioned in that district—I am now speaking of Somerset.

11,501. Do you mean local rates generally or some particular rates?—The highway rate and the sanitary rate.

11,502. On what ground did they complain of the highway rate?—On the ground that those who use the road most pay least for its maintenance.

11,503. You mean brewers and such like?—Brewers and traders.

11,504. Who used to pay the turnpike tolls?—Yes, the turnpike tolls.

11,505. And largely assisted in keeping up the roads, but these people now pay a small part?—Yes.

11,506. As to the sanitary rates I suppose you say that they are of no benefit to the land?—Yes, in many instances the land is a considerable distance from the drains for which this money is paid.

11,507. The expenditure is for the benefit of the inhabitants, but not specially for the benefit of the occupiers of the land?—It is for the benefit of the houses instead of the land.

11,508. Were there any instances in the neighbourhood particularly with reference to the sanitary rates, given to you?—No, there were none brought under my notice.

11,509. But as a matter of principle taxing land for carrying out improvements for the benefit of houses and of the inhabitants of houses was objected to?—Yes.

11,510. Were there any other subjects of complaint?—Of course the low price of corn was a considerable complaint in the corn-growing district.

he corn eturns.

11,511. That is one cause of the depression, but I meant rather with regard to complaints which could be met by legislation. There were some complaints as to the corn returns?—The corn returns were objected to on two or three grounds. The first ground on which they were objected to was their being taken from the merchants and frequently giving a fictitious value to the produce by the addition of railway rates, freight, and profit on re-sales.

11,512. The corn returns are supposed to give the price of certain descriptions of corn in particular markets?—Yes.

11,513. And whether the corn is grown in that neighbourhood or not it is the price of the market that is supposed to be returned. Would that price be affected by the corn having been produced in the neighbourhood or brought from a distance?—By the corn brought from a distance.

11,514. Would it make more because it was brought from a distance?—It is usual, but I suppose that the man who sells the corn has a profit, with railway charges included.

11,515. But only at the price at that market?—I admit that, but it might be sold twice or three times over.

11,516. But no amount of sales could give it any other value than the value of the market?—No, but the contention of these gentlemen was that the grower should make the return and not the purchaser.

11,517. And that complaint was made in order to press a change in the nature of the returns?—It would.

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11,518. Did you find any expression of opinion in favour of fixity of tenure or a feeling of insecurity on the part of tenants?—Not in this neighbourhood at all, not in Somerset. The only remark which I heard with regard to it was at Yeovil, where I attended the market and where there were several farmers, and the generally received opinion was that they did not want a land court.

he Ground ame Act.

11,519. Was there any complaint with regard to the game laws?—One or two in the county of Somerset. One gentleman alleged that he was not enabled to have a sufficient quantity of guns to destroy rabbits which did him a great amount of harm, and that the landlord could have as many guns as he pleased, whereas he was restricted to only one gun.

11,520. The tenant could only use a gun himself or delegate the use to one man?—Yes.

11,521. Damage was done, I suppose, in a few instances?—I had only one other instance of damage done by game besides the one that I have just spoken of. One gentleman said that he had been driven off a farm. That really was in Warwickshire; that was not in Somersetshire.

on bar-

11,522. Was there any demand for the re-imposition of the malt tax?—It was thought by many of the Somerset men that if a tax were put on barley it would be very much in the interests of temperance—that the beer which was brewed would be brewed from barley alone, and not from what it is now composed of.

11,523. But I presume that the object was not so much to promote temperance as to raise the price of barley?—I did not ask that question.

11,524. But if it were put forward as a remedy for agricultural depression it could only be done by raising prices?—By raising prices. It was the intention to raise prices.

Protection.

11,525. Were there any other suggestions for raising the price of home produce?—The unanimous suggestion, I may say, in all the arable districts was for a tax to be put upon the importation of foreign flour—foreign manufactured articles, including flour. That had general acceptation.

11,526. Would not that increase the price of food?—In a very infinitesimal degree, it was stated and believed, because it was not interfering with the importation of wheat and would give large employment to the artizans and would much benefit the English farmer by giving him the offals now left behind.

11,527. That was the suggestion—to improve the agricultural situation by increasing the price?—I suppose it would increase the price in a certain degree—in a small degree.

11,528. Was it argued that with that increase of price there would not be a corresponding increase in the price of bread?—It was supposed that the increase of price would be very small indeed, but the benefit would principally be from the offals and more employment would be given.

11,529. You have heard, no doubt, that complaints are made as to the price of bread not decreasing with the price of corn; you have heard the argument that the cost of making and manufacturing the article is so large a part of the cost of bread that it remains the same whether the price of the ingredients is high or low?—Yes, I have heard that.

11,530. If that be true with regard to a decrease of prices it would be equally true with regard to the increase of prices?—It would.

11,531. And 10*s.* per quarter on wheat which was at 24*s.* would not bring a corresponding increase in the price of bread?—That, I believe, is generally understood.

11,532. That was the argument?—Yes.

11,533. That a moderate duty upon wheat or flour would not increase the price of food considerably?—It would not, and flour especially, I may say, because it would not interfere with the supply.

11,534. Besides the district of Frome, I believe you saw something of the rich grazing district in the neighbourhood of Bridgewater?—I did.

11,535. And you have given some particulars of the present value of certain land which is annually let by auction?—Yes, on page 11 in my report.

11,536. That would seem to show that there has been a very considerable decrease at times, but that during recent years there has been no decrease in value?—There was an increase in the two last years, but in every other year to the end of 1890, an actual decrease; 1891 had an increase and 1892 had an increase, and 1893 has an increase.

11,537. Taking periods of eight years, three years, and five years, the statement shows that the value now is very much less than in 1878, but it is greater at the present time than in 1881?—Yes.

11,538. What I desire to point out is that during the last three years there has been an apparent increase in the value of the rich grazing land which is put up to competition every year?—Yes.

11,539. The tenant paying nothing but the rent, not even the shepherding?—Paying nothing at all.

11,540. That would not apply to the case of arable land?—Yes.

Dairying.

11,541. Do you happen to know what has been the per-centage of decrease in the value of arable lands in the Frome district?—In the Frome district, the first district that I saw, that is the dairy district, being principally grass land, the average decrease of rentals appeared to be from 30 or 40 per cent., or say 25 to 40 per cent.; but in the arable lands, which are higher, nearer to Bath they reached to over 50 per cent.

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11,542. In the Frome district the cows are not let to dairymen; they are kept in hand by the farmers?—They are kept in hand by the farmers, but I have heard of cases in the county in which cows were let.

11,543. That would be in another district; in the arable district?—More particularly on the Wiltshire Downs; in the high Down district.

11,544. Do you know what decrease there has been in value?—From 2*l.* to 2*l.* 10*s.* per cow.

11,545. And that would not be made up to the farmer in any way?—I do not know how it could.

11,546. There is a slight difference in the cost of feeding them. The purchased stuff would be rather cheaper?—The purchased stuff this year; the great bulk of the purchased stuff was foreign hay, which was very dear.

11,547. But I am speaking of the average, not taking an exceptional year, but the average?—Yes; there would be some difference in the prices there.

Depression in the Warminster district.

11,548. Then you extended your observations also to the district of Warminster, which is of an entirely different kind of farming?—Yes, it is different.

11,549. They are large down farms, are they not?—They are large down farms, extending from 1,000 to 2,000 acres each.

11,550. Did you find depression there?—I found very much decreased rentals, and according to the accounts very much decreased returns both from live stock and from corn.

Sheep breeding.

11,551. Particularly in sheep? — Particularly in sheep, which I give an example of.

11,552. You give the price of lambs sold off the same farm, of the same description during six years, with a decrease of something like 33 per cent.?—Yes.

11,553. And the ewes from which these lambs were bred would decrease in value to a corresponding degree, I suppose?—If you look at page 10, the second paragraph, you will see the price of ewes.

11,554. The ewes are 60*s.* per head in 1882, and 28*s.* in 1892, and 22*s.* in 1893?—Yes; 22*s.* is a much greater decrease.

11,555. And the wool has decreased very considerably in value?—Wool has decreased from 14*d.* to 9*d.* per lb.

Corn-growing.

11,556. And the corn; what do you say about that?—And the corn from 44*s.* per quarter in 1882 down to 26*s.* in 1892.

11,557. Would not the difference be something like the difference in the rent of the land—the difference in the receipts from those subjects?—I should think it would be more.

11,558. More than the whole rent of the land?—More than the whole rent of the land.

11,559. Then depression there is not so recent?—No, it has been gradually coming.

11,560. And the corn and sheep districts have suffered much more, and for a much longer period than the cheese and dairy districts?—Yes, and suffered in a greater degree.

Rates.

11,561. Have any other remedies been suggested to improve the position of the farmers?—I may say that there was a feeling that income derived from personal property had a distinct advantage now in being exempt from all contributions to local burdens.

11,562. That is the whole point, I suppose, of the argument against local rates?—Yes.

11,563. That personal property does not contribute?—That personal property does not contribute.

The marking of foreign meat.

11,564. Have you any suggestion as to the selling of foreign meat?—Yes, that all foreign produce should be labelled as such; that is the general opinion throughout the whole of that district. I made an illustration which is rather peculiar, which you will find on page 14, the 81st paragraph. A farmer told me that a tradesman sent to his dairyman requesting the loan of his stamp to stamp a quantity of Italian butter.

11,565. We will presume that the English butter is worth more than the Italian butter?—No doubt.

11,566. You think that ought to be prohibited by law?—Certainly; that the Merchandise Marks Act should be extended to all foreign produce.

11,567. Did you find a general disposition to give you information amongst the farmers?—Very much so indeed, I am afraid that I gave considerable offence to some farmers in the district by declining to visit their neighbourhood on account of the distance.

11,568. (*Chairman.*) Everybody wanted to see you?—That is so.

11,569. (*Mr. Little.*) You think that the farmers appreciated the Assistant Commissioners coming to inquire into the cause of the depression?—I had every reason to believe so.

Compensation for home-grown produce.

11,570. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) On page 10 it is contended that "Home-grown produce consumed on the farm should "be included in the schedule for compensation." Did you get any practical suggestion how this could be vouched for, and carried out?—It was suggested that samples of the corn should be kept, and if necessary, that the valuers or referees should be allowed to take evidence on oath as to the correctness of these samples, and that a severe penalty should be put on anyone going against them.

11,571. (*Viscount Cobham.*) What is the acreage dealt with in these comparative statements of rents on the Bridgwater lands at page 11 of your report?—1,700 acres; I think I am right in saying that. It is very splendid land.

Deficient hay crop.

11,572. (*Chairman.*) On page 10 of your report, paragraph 45, you give us as an illustration the statement made to you by a farmer in the neighbourhood of Yeovil. He summarises the the hay crop thus: "In "1890 and previously I grew 150 tons annually; in "1892 I made 50 tons; and this year I shall hardly "make 10 tons.—'And this I found to be about the "'proportion of the hay crop, whenever I made an "'inquiry, except where irrigation is practised.' That "is due to two successive bad seasons"?—That is so.

11,573. One of very low temperature, and the other of drought?—Considerable drought.

11,574. Those, therefore, were very exceptional cases?—Yes.

11,575. And it was unfortunate that they should have followed consecutively?—The farmers admit that.

11,576. Speaking of another gentleman in your report. You say, "A gentleman of great experience "gave as his opinion that the hay crop is so deficient "that provision is not made for wintering more than "one-fourth of the usual amount of stock on the dairy "farms. Cattle must therefore be sold for what they "will fetch, and probably from want of means in the "spring will not be replaced." That seems to be an explanation of the low price of cattle, that cattle was thrown upon the market by numbers of farmers who had no fodder for them, and consequently the price was reduced?—That is so. If I may be allowed to mention an illustration which occurred to me after I had written my report. A personal friend of mine was asked by a gentleman to sell 25 cows for him, and he said of course he should be glad to sell them, and he went to value them, and he told the owner that he would have to take 5*l.* each for them; the owner said that he should not think of taking anything of the kind, and my friend said, "Well, you had better give them away than keep them." "How is that?" said the owner, the answer was, "I can prove it in a very few minutes;" it was in October when this took place; "these cows will not "calve until March or thereabouts, and they will each "eat two tons of hay between now and March, when "they will come down, and the two tons of hay is "now worth more than the cows will be worth then."

11,577. The consequence was that large numbers of cattle were thrown upon the market, and therefore the price went down?—Yes.

11,578. And that accounts for the fall of price of the cattle and also the extreme loss of the pasture farmers during the last two years?—I should not think that it applies to the losses with regard to the sheep.

11,579. Not to the sheep?—Not in the same degree.

11,580. But mainly in the case of dairy farms?—Mainly in the case of dairy farms. I have no doubt it does apply.

11,581. The depression in these cases has been mainly during the last two years?—With regard to cattle and dairy farms.

11,582. But in the case of corn farms it has been of longer standing?—Considerably longer standing.

11,583. Owing to the low price of corn and especially wheat?—Yes.

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rents.

11,584. In paragraph 42 I see that in the case of the large arable farms the reductions of rent have been very large; but in the case of the pasture farms they have been only slight reductions?—That is so.

11,585. That, I suppose, has rather reference to the period before the last two years—the rents were fixed upon an average of years?—Yes. Then I think during the last two years even on all those farms, there have been remissions of rent, abatements of rent and further reductions.

11,586. Remissions within the last two years?—Yes.

11,587. To meet the exceptional case?—Yes, to meet the exceptional case.

11,588. But apart from the last two years, there have not been very considerable reductions on pasture farms?—Not in this immediate district. You will allow me to observe that there are four different districts. In the first district which is all pasture, there has been a considerable amount of reductions, both reductions and abatements of rent; but in this district which is of a more mixed character, where small farms are somewhat an exception, and grass land still an exception, the reductions have not been so great.

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11,589. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Should the tithe rent charge be added to the reductions?—The tithe rent-charge was in almost all instances paid by the landlord.

11,590. Before the passing of the last Act?—I was told this: if it had been paid by the tenant previous to the last Act and the tenant refused, the landlord lost it.

11,591. That has to be added to that calculation of yours then?—Yes.

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11,592. (*Mr. Little.*) Is there anything else which you would wish to say to the Commission?—I have an account which was given me by a gentleman of position in Somersetshire, but he does not wish to have his name published. He gives an account of his dairy farm for three years.

11,593. It is the last three years?—They are the years 1889–90, 1890–91, and 1891–92.

11,594. Can you give us the extent of the farm?—201 acres.

11,595. Is it a mixed farm?—It is; there are 39 acres 1 rood 7 perches of arable land, and 161 acres 3 roods 6 perches of pasture land.

11,596. The principal business is the production of cheese, is it not?—The chief business is Cheddar cheese making, and a good many pigs are fattened.

11,597. Do you know whether this farm has been carried on on that system for some time?—I believe it has.

11,598. It is not a newly started one?—No.

11,599. What is the net result?—The farm was well farmed and improved in condition so that in giving up at Lady-day in 1892, it was readily let at the old rent. That is what the gentleman says.

11,600. (*Chairman.*) Does he say what the rent was?—The rent was 352*l.*

11,601. Is that for the 201 acres?—Yes.

11,602. (*Mr. Little.*) What are the rates and tithes?—There is no tithe and the rates and taxes are separately charged.

11,603. How much are they?—47*l.* in the first year, 31*l.* in the second, and 38*l.* in the third.

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11,604. What are the gross receipts?—The gross receipts were 3,560*l.* in 1889, 3,600*l.* in 1890, and 3,947*l.* in 1891.

11,605. What is the balance of profit or loss?—For the valuation of the stock at Lady-day, and, after what is properly taken off, the loss on the first year's farming is 100*l.*, on the second year it is 140*l.*, and on the third year it is 582*l.*

11,606. How much of that was loss in depreciation of stock?—That is rather difficult to arrive at.

11,607. Is not the valuation for each year given?—Yes.

11,608. How does the first valuation compare with the last?—The first valuation of stock is 1,872*l.*, the second is 2,037*l.*, and the third is 1,839*l.*

11,609. Then there had been a very slight decrease in the valuation of the stock, from 1,872*l.* to 1,839*l.*?—Very little.

11,610. And the loss had increased from 100*l.* to 582*l.*?—Yes.

11,611. And that was not from the falling off in the gross value of the produce, because that increased from 3,560*l.* to 3,947*l.*?—Yes.

11,612. Then the expenses of making that profit must have increased very largely?—The manure bill has increased double, and the oil cakes and feeding stuffs are 152*l.* more.

11,613. But the net result of it all is that though there was an increase of produce, there was a greater increase of expenditure, and consequent loss?—Yes.

11,614. And that loss was not in the shape of depreciation of stock?—It would be to a certain extent, because I expect there was more stock kept during last year.

11,615. Had the farm improved by this system of management so that it was possible to let it at the same rental as before?—So says the gentleman.

11,616. (*Chairman.*) How do you account for it, that in a case in which the losses have been serious for three years, and in the last year amounting to 582*l.*, that he should let that farm to any tenant, at the same rent, the rent being a comparatively high one of 1*l.* 10*s.* per acre?—It was in the hands of the owner for three years.

11,617. But I understood you to say that it let at the same rent?—Yes, at the expiration of that time.

11,618. Then, on giving it up himself, he let it readily?—Yes.

11,619. Can you understand that anybody could be found to be giving that high rent in the face of the fact that they had been losing money by it?—There would be two reasons why a person would be likely to do so: for instance, the farm would be increased in value on account of the condition, and then there would be an opportunity of purchasing his incoming stock at a low rate.

11,620. The incoming tenant would come in at an advantage on account of the low price of the stock?—I think so.

11,621. At all events a man was found who expected to make a profit out of it, paying a high rent?—So says the owner.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

Twenty-first Day.

Friday, 9th March 1894.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
Captain OWEN-THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.

CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary*.
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq. } *Assistant*
FREEMAN THOMAS, Esq. } *Secretaries*.

Mr. R. H. Pringle.

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Mr. R. HUNTER PRINGLE re-called and further examined.

11,623. (*Chairman.*) You desire to explain what you have done in the way of making a map of the district of Essex which you have been inquiring into, do you not?—Yes. (*See map appended to the witness's report on Essex.*)

Uncultivated land in Essex.

11,624-5. What do the maps show?—The land which has gone out of arable cultivation. All that which is marked across and coloured has gone out of arable cultivation, and it embraces the peninsula between the Blackwater on the north, the Thames on the south, and the Great Eastern Railway on the east. It is on the six-inch scale.

11,626. Does it distinguish the land laid down into permanent grass from that which has tumbled into grass?—As far as possible it does. I went over a great many fields which undoubtedly were laid down to seed 10 years ago, but they have died off, and it is now almost impossible to tell the difference between that land and the land which has tumbled down. Those green places have been seeded down, but this particular spot (*pointing to the map*) I was on yesterday, and the pasture is no better than the land which has tumbled down.

Land falling down to grass.

11,627. What is the condition of the land which has tumbled into grass after five or six years?—It goes under the name of "barren" in Essex, and it is an uncommonly good word for it.

11,628. Does it ultimately become pasture?—No, it can hardly be said to improve; it represents a very low value as a run for stock.

11,629. But I presume that as time goes on the grass improves upon it?—That (*exhibiting a photograph*) is the natural grass; it takes a very long time to come to anything.

11,630. (*Mr. Little.*) What is the natural grass; is it twitch?—It is twitch, and what is called water grass.

11,631. Supposing an increase in the price of wheat occurred, this land would not be available for wheat growing?—Of course it would have need to be reclaimed.

11,632. It would have to be fallowed?—It would have to be fallowed; it is all wheat growing land, but it would take time, and would be rather expensive to get into wheat growing condition.

11,633. Where there is twitch and water grass it would require a considerable expenditure of money?—It would, undoubtedly. If doing well in pasture land it would be best to leave it so.

Tithe.

11,634. (*Chairman.*) I suppose the whole rent of the farm would govern the question of whether the tithe should be reduced or not under the Tithe Act?—Yes, under the Tithe Act there have been attempts to get remission, and small remissions have in some cases been got; but they are very trifling.

11,635. (*Mr. Giffen.*) How comes it that it is as heavily rated as the rent?—Because the assessment committees do not take the rent as the basis of assessment. You remember asking me with reference to the Appendix M. of my report. I have got the particulars. This is the case of a gentleman who farms 15 farms, and his assessment is 50 per cent. more than he actually pays as rent.

11,636. (*Chairman.*) Has he taken them lately?—Some of them.

11,637. And there are others that he has rented?—Yes.

11,638. Has he taken them lately?—Yes, within the last 10 or 12 years.

11,639. That would seem to indicate that he hopes or contemplates making a profit out of them?—I think not; in a great many instances he could not help himself, and the last tenant left, and he was obliged to take that up.

11,640. But he has rented some, and he was under no obligation to rent others; therefore he took them in the hopes that he would be able to make a profit?—Yes, I am sure that he did. There were two farms that lay near to his place, and he thought that he could work them cheaper than anyone else.

11,641-2. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Has any attempt been made to improve what you style the barren land by feeding corn or cake upon it with cattle or sheep?—Very little indeed; much more might be done by cake feeding. I am afraid that the farmers of that land are almost ruined, and unable to buy sufficient stock.

Scotch far-mers.

11,643. (*Chairman.*) Take the Scotch farmers that you spoke of, they appear to understand how to let the land down into grass; what have they done?—Well, I have been over a lot of three-horse land laid down by Scotchmen, but it has not been a success at all. I think I mentioned that.

11,644. The general conclusion of your report as to the Scotch farmers is that they were making the two ends meet, and some were making a profit?—But I particularly guarded myself against saying that the Scotch farmers had succeeded on the three-horse land. *This* is three-horse land (*pointing to the map*).

Unoccupi land.

11,645-6. (*Mr. Clay.*) What percentage have you of unoccupied land?—I would say that nearly two-thirds of that land is barren; and on *that* map there (*pointing to a map*), I should think half of that, almost.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. Jabez Turner re-called and further examined.

Land falling down to grass.

11,647. (*Viscount Cobham.*) With regard to the land which you say in your report upon the Stratford-on-Avon district of Warwickshire is falling down to grass, is it as a rule adapted to carry grass?—A considerable portion of it is; but when you get down within some short distance of Stratford-upon-Avon, where I mention in my report the land alters in character so greatly, a vast quantity of it is not good grass, and never will be.

11,648. But still it will carry pasture of a sort?—Yes.

11,649–50. In many of those cases it would pay the landowner better to neglect the farm buildings and allow the fences to go down, and allow the grass to grow as it pleases rather than to let the farms to tenants at the rents he could get?—I should scarcely think it would pay better. If the land were properly put to grass it would certainly pay better, but not in its present condition. I was told in the case of one estate that I mentioned that a good deal of the land only makes half-a-crown an acre for the year. One gentleman told me that he bought something like 50 acres; and the keep for six months was between 3*s.* and 4*s.* per acre.

11,651. But on the better class of land pastures could be profitably made and maintained?—Yes, they could, no doubt, in the case I have mentioned, in which the gentlemen had bought a farm and laid it down to grass, and laid it down properly; it was growing fair grass.

Allotments.

11,652. Referring to the allotments, I presume you got the information mainly from farmers, not from labourers?—I got it from different sources, in one case from a farmer, in another case from a land agent, and in another from a labourer, and another from a town official. I took four different statements with regard to the allotments.

11,653. Do you think that the farmers, as a rule, were against allotments?—Not at all.

Technical instruction.

11,654. The general opinion appears to be very much against technical education as carried on by the county council, is that so?—May I refer to Somerset as well as Warwickshire?

11,655. Yes?—In Somersetshire there was a general concensus of opinion that technical education classes had done a vast amount of good, especially with regard to cheese and butter making; and the same view obtained in Warwickshire to a certain extent, but not to so great an extent with regard to cheese and butter; but a very strong opinion was expressed that the classes for the higher education were utterly useless for the persons whom they were intended to benefit.

11,656. Do you mean the farming classes?—The classes on chemistry, geology, and botany, and such like.

11,657. Those subjects have been taken up with a great deal of energy and care by the county council of Warwickshire, have they not?—I believe they have.

11,658. But the farmers generally think that the money has been more or less wasted?—Yes, that it has been more or less wasted, except in the matter of the dairy classes.

11,659. Were any suggestions made for the better administration of those funds?—The education of farm labourers in the different processes of agricultural work was advocated.

11,660. Beginning at the bottom?—Beginning at the bottom. So with regard to hedging, draining, and such like work, which of late years, I must say, has fallen into a considerable amount of abeyance, on account of the young men leaving the villages.

Absence of labourers.

11,661. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Did you hear complaints among the farmers that they could not get skilled labourers for hedging and draining, and thatching?—Not that they could not get them, but that there was a difficulty in getting them; much more than there used to be.

Sale of cattle by live-weight.

11,662. Did you hear any expression of opinion as to the advantage or disadvantage of fat and store cattle, and sheep, being sold by weight in the different markets?—No, I did not.

11,663. Neither in Warwickshire nor Somersetshire?—Neither in Warwickshire nor Somersetshire.

Slaughter of foreign cattle.

11,664. Nor any expression as to the cattle disease; whether cattle should be killed at the ports of debarkation, for instance?—There was no remark made upon that, because all their cattle are now healthy; there being no disease there was no remark made upon it.

Assessment to rates.

11,665. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) I see the rents have been reduced from 25 to 60 per cent.; have the assessments been reduced proportionately?—I believe they have been reduced proportionately, because the tenant would, of course, have his option of appealing to the assessment committee. I was told that they have been considerably reduced, but whether entirely in proportion I am not able to say.

11,666. All the assessment committees do not reduce the assessment, as you are aware, in proportion to the absolute reduction of the rent?—I thought that they were obliged to reduce the assessment in proportion to the absolute reduction of rent.

Rates.

11,667. Not always. Have the rates increased?—There was a diversity of opinion on that head, but I think the amount of money paid was no more than it was a few years ago. I found when I really came to examine into the parish accounts, that no more money was paid, although the amount in the pound, owing to the decreased assessment, appeared more.

11,668. Therefore the county council have not been so extravagant as is set forth in this report?—Well, in the report I embodied the opinions which I received.

11,669. At the same time the rates have not increased, they are rather less?—In one or two cases in the parish books I found that the amount of money, as I have mentioned in my report, was something like the same, but the amount in the pound had increased.

11,670. (*Mr. Little.*) A considerable quantity of the land in the neighbourhood of Stratford-on-Avon is adapted for wheat and beans?—It is almost entirely adapted for that.

Existence of depression.

11,671. And all land of that description has very seriously deteriorated in value from the price of wheat?—Very seriously indeed.

11,672. And is that land adaptable for other purposes?—I should be sorry to try to adapt it; it is strictly wheat and bean land.

11,673. Mixed up with it there is a good deal of grazing?—A fair amount of grazing.

11,674. And is the grass of fair quality?—Not of a high quality, except in some few instances.

11,675. I presume that where grass is a considerable portion of the farm there is less depression than where it is entirely arable?—Certainly.

11,676. Do the grazing farmers complain of their profits diminishing?—Most of them are of a mixed character and the reply that I had was, that the greater the amount of arable land the greater the amount of depression felt.

11,677. Then the particular evidences of depression are that the rents have been very much reduced?—Yes.

11,678. That there are a great many farms in hand, and that the changes of tenancy have been very frequent?—Yes.

11,679. You publish one set of farm accounts, which I understand is the only one you were able to get?—With this exception.

11,680. That is only an account for one year?—Yes.

11,681. But it shows a loss which is practically equivalent to the whole rent of the farm?—Yes.

Changes in the system of cultivation.

11,682. Did you observe any great changes in the system of cultivation?—In the system of cultivation I could observe no changes, but want of cultivation was very evident.

11,683. There is no substitution of other crops for which cereals are not profitable?—I do not think there was any substitution.

11,684. It is rather that the land has been allowed to go away to rough grass?—Simply so: it was specially wheat and bean land.

Potato-growing.

11,685. But you have given evidence of one farm, where there was a very large growth of potatoes?—Yes.

11,686. Is that a business that could be largely extended in that country?—I think not. I think where the land is suitable for the growth of potatoes, there they are grown.

11,687. And where the land is accessible to railways and labour?—That farm was extremely well situated with regard to the town, and to the delivery both of manure and goods, and the land was peculiarly adapted for the growth of potatoes.

Large and small farms compared.

11,688. Did you discover that there was any great difference in condition between large and small farmers, or did large farmers farm with more or less success than small farmers?—There did not seem to be very many small farmers in that district; when I say small I may say that there were few farms of less than 200 acres, or from 150 to 200 acres.

11,689. There were no working farmers, no small farms, where the work was all done by the farmer?—A few, but not very many.

11,690. Were you able to observe any great difference between the comparative prosperity of large and small farmers?—The idea that was expressed to me generally was, that the small farmer would be utterly ruined this year, would be crushed by the prices which he had to take for his produce.

11,691. More so than the large farmer?—Well, the large farmers, in many instances, supplement their business by other pursuits, such as steam cultivation, steam engines, and some cattle dealing, and other pursuits of that kind in connexion with agriculture.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

11,692. There was some complaint as to the operation of the Agricultural Holdings Act, was there not?—There were many complaints with regard to the time allowed for the landlord to send in his claim for waste.

11,693. But was that the only cause of complaint?—Another cause was that home produce was not scheduled.

11,694. The consumption of home produce was not the subject of allowance, do you mean?—Yes; and the farmers there contend that it should be.

11,695. You instance one case where the Act was not put into operation, and you say "proceedings of "this character are certain to bring the Act into "contempt"; will you explain that; it is at page 10 of your Report. In that case the tenant failed to give notice of his intention to claim?—Yes, that was so.

11,696. The farmer neglected to give notice, and consequently could make no claim under the Agricultural Holdings Act, and then the landlord made a claim for waste, but not under the Act?—Yes, under the Act.

11,697. But not as a counter-claim?—No; because there was no claim. There was not a counter-claim, but he claimed for waste on the last permissible day.

11,698. The landlord claimed under the common law and, therefore, it is not an instance of the Act failing, but an instance of the tenant losing by neglect what he might have got?—I understand it now, but the tenant gave me the information, and I took it as he gave it to me and I repeated what he said.

11,699. (*Chairman.*) Very likely he did not understand?—He did not understand the distinction, because he told me that he did not claim under the Act, but the landlord did. I have not looked into it myself.

Complaints and suggested remedies.

11,700. (*Mr. Little.*) The subjects of complaint by the farmers were similar to those in Somersetshire as to the local taxation and railway rates and want of security?—They were of the same kind.

11,701. And the remedies proposed were similar to those we discussed yesterday?—They were of the same character.

Highway rate.

11,702. (*Mr. Dalton.*) In both counties they seem to have complained of the highway rate?—They complained of the highway rate.

11,703. But that is only payable in respect of country lanes. Did they maintain that these country lanes did not add to the value of the agricultural land?—I did not hear any remark of that kind. The complaint was against the highway rate generally as being paid by the land instead of by the people who used it.

11,704. Does it not benefit the land? Are not those roads made nearly entirely for the benefit of the land? They are not made for the butchers and bakers there; the land would be worth nothing without the roads?—I found in Somerset great complaints on account of colliery traffic, for instance.

11,705. Yes, but that would be extraordinary traffic, they might recover that from the colliery under the Highway Act. But those highways have been a charge upon the land from time immemorial, and their cost has not increased, has it, in the rural districts?—I am told that they have increased in the rural districts.

11,706. Then you have the case of a factory and a farm; is that a hypothetical or an actual case?—It is an actual case, that is in Somerset.

Rates.

11,707. What kind of a factory was it? It employs 2,000 hands and it is rated at 400*l.*, and it seems a very low assessment?—I am informed of that by a gentleman who lived in the immediate neighbourhood, and he was a man who would know.

11,708. Was it in an urban district or a rural district?—I think a rural district.

11,709. You say they employ 2,000 hands, and, therefore, would it not be in a town?—It was not in a large town.

11,710. Well, but it must have employed the whole of the population of a small town?—It is in the neighbourhood of Glastonbury.

11,711. Do you feel sure about those figures?—Yes.

11,712. But with 2,000 hands, you see, would there not be a population of at least 6,000 or 7,000 people in the town when one factory employed 2,000 hands?—I have the statement of the gentleman himself, and those are the figures he gave me.

11,713. Five hundred children are sent to the Board School, so that there must be a large population round it?—Of course there would be a population to that extent—that was in Somerset also.

11,714. Did you find that the assessment for the whole county had gone down either in Warwick or Somerset?—I did not inquire as to that.

11,715. My impression is that it has gone up in both counties?—I did not inquire.

11,716. Has the county rate gone up in the pound?—I inquired only as to the sum total of the local rates. I did not divide them.

11,717. Nobody seemed to attach any value to dividing the rate between the owner and occupier?—Not at all.

11,718. What was the precise reason of that; if they felt the burden of the rate was very heavy, why did they not think it was worth while to be relieved of half of it?—Of course I am speaking the opinion that was given me. The general opinion was that the depression was so great that even the relief of the whole of the rates would be a very inadequate remedy.

11,719. But if the rates are so high it would give them a very great relief if the half was taken off the occupier; or do they think that it would go on to the rent?—The opinion received was that if the whole of the rates were taken off it would be inadequate, therefore, if half were taken off it would be still less adequate.

11,720. But still they complained of the rates?—They complained of the incidence of them on account of the injustice of them.

Quality of farming.

11,721. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) You say in your report that there is a great variation in this district in the quality of land within a small radius?—Yes.

11,722. Is that the result of good and bad farming?—Certainly not, because it sometimes exists in the same field. The men say that it is very extraordinary that there should be such a great variation in so short a distance.

11,723. Did you find that the farmers who are farming the best land are doing fairly well in this part of the country?—They all complained, but the farmers who are farming the best land are doing the best, there can be no doubt about that.

11,724. And are those who are farming inferior land farming as well as they can, or are they short of capital?—I do not think that they are short of capital for farming a considerable portion of the county, that is, the strong land; because the men who are doing best are those who keep the best stock and sheep on the ploughed land, and there is only a small proportion of the land which will grow turnips. Therefore the others are losing on account of their produce being at a very low price.

11,725. Is the land as well cultivated as it was formerly?—No, not even in cases where it is still under cultivation; it is not so well done as it used to be.

11,726. Then it deteriorates in quality in that way, and naturally they will feel the depression all the more?—I should say so.

Characteristics of district.

11,727. (*Chairman.*) The district you visited near Stratford was, I believe, until lately, mainly an arable district?—A considerable portion of it.

11,728. And I understand from you that it was heavy land, suitable for growing wheat and beans?—A short distance from Stratford, immediately round Stratford, the land is of a much better quality, and it still remains arable; but when you get about 5 miles or 6 miles away from Stratford, you find quite a different class of land, gradually hardening and stiffening into strong wheat and bean land.

11,729. Is it that land that has suffered most severely?—Yes.

Particulars of a farm.

11,730. Has the better land that you spoke of in the neighbourhood of Stratford suffered?—It has suffered, but not so much; but the rentals have decreased very much indeed. If you turn to one rental on a very good farm, which I noted particularly in Appendix D, page 14, you will see that the rent in 1875 was 1,027*l.*

11,731. Does that farm consist of good land?—Very good land, very useful land indeed.

11,732. The rental was, in 1875, 1,027*l.* for 470 acres, which is over 2*l.* an acre?—Yes.

11,733. And it is now 450*l.*?—It is now 450*l.*

11,734. And therefore it is about 1*l.* an acre?—It is not quite 1*l.* an acre. It is a very good farm—some of it very good turnip land indeed.

11,735. Does that farm pay at that rent?—The tenant informs me that it scarcely paid even now at the reduced rent. I may say that the farmer who occupied it was a butcher as well as a farmer.

11,736. It is not a case merely of a tenant farmer?—Not entirely a tenant farmer.

Depression in the heavy land district.

11,737. Now, going to the worst land you spoke of, namely, the heavy land, at a distance from Stratford, which is suitable for wheat and beans, I presume that that land has suffered more than other districts on account of the comparatively great reduction of the price of wheat?—Exactly.

11,738. Then I presume that the last two years it has suffered to an unusual degree owing to bad seasons?—In both the two last years it, no doubt, has suffered in an unusual degree, owing to the bad seasons. The results are given on page 13. The returns for the different quantities of wheat grown during the last year show a very great difference.

11,739. The last two years have been extremely bad as regards the season?—Yes.

11,740. And have not been compensated for by any increase of price?—No, they have been made worse by a decrease in price.

11,741. The price has fallen still more?—Yes.

11,742. Therefore the farmers in that district have had the double disadvantage of the bad seasons and the low prices?—Yes.

11,743. During the last few years, apparently, there has been a considerable extent of land laid down in grass?—It has laid itself down.

11,744. To what extent have you observed that some farms in that district can be made to pay under the present conditions? There is a case mentioned on page 5, paragraph 14, of a farm, consisting of 365 acres, which you carefully inspected, which was purchased a few years ago by an enterprising farmer. Is that in the worst district?—No, it is not in the worst district, and it is not in the best district.

11,745. But it is about the medium?—It is about a medium farm.

11,746. This person, having bought his farm, "converted the whole into pasture by seeding in a proper "and business-like manner, has put up additional "buildings, and is occupying the whole as a dairy and "stock-raising farm"?—Yes.

11,747. I rather gather from you that he has made it pay?—He hopes to make it pay; he has not been there above three years, I think. He is a very enterprising man, with a fair amount of capital, and attends strictly to his business. He has turned it all into pasture; it is rather a peculiar thing, showing that he did not trust in the arable.

11,748. In that case, time has not yet been given to show the results?—Not positively.

11,749. Did you find him sanguine about it?—Fairly so.

11,750. Fairly so?—He was complaining to a certain degree of the price of stock which he had to sell, but not in any special degree, because he both buys and sells, naturally.

Value of dairy produce.

11,751. Has the price of milk and dairy produce fallen or no?—The price of milk has not fallen; the price of butter, as far as I could learn, has fallen somewhat.

11,752. Somewhat?—Yes, but not much; and cheese has fallen apparently in accordance with the quality of it.

11,753. According to the quality?—Yes.

11,754. Had the bad seasons resulted in a bad quality of cheese; was it something like that?—Not exactly; one result I found generally mentioned was that the cheese was not so good as it used to be on account of the sale of milk.

11,755. That has interfered with the production of cheese on the farm?—It has interfered with the quality of the cheese to a certain degree. I was told that generally. I made several inquiries, especially in Somerset, with regard to the cheese-making industry, and I was told that there was a very great demand for the very best cheese which could be made, but that it was difficult to find.

11,756. (*Viscount Cobham.*) There is no cheese of that quality produced in Warwickshire, is there?—No.

11,757. (*Chairman.*) At page 9, paragraph 38, you say, "I hear of some successful milk farms in the "district, but have not been favoured with a return "from any of them." Were those farms in the worst district that you speak of?—No, they were not. It is a very difficult question to answer directly because, as I have stated, one farm will be a fairly good one and the next adjoining will be of a very middling character indeed, on account of the great variation of the soil.

11,758. Did you go over any of these successful milk farms?—No, I did not.

11,759. Of course it is very important to ascertain the causes of success on some farms in districts which otherwise are in a bad condition?—All the farms which sell milk as far as I could learn were in the immediate neighbourhood of the towns—in the immediate neighbourhood of Warwick and in the immediate neighbourhood of Stratford—and wherever the delivery was easy.

Successful farms.

11,760. Then you speak of the prize farms of the Royal Agricultural Society's Warwick meeting of 1892 being within the district?—Yes.

11,761. Did you go over any one of those prize farms?—Not on this occasion. I had been over one of them before.

11,762. There were three prize farms apparently, one in each class?—Yes.

11,763. And it is a condition, I think, of the prize that the farm must be worked to pecuniary advantage, is it not?—I expect so.

11,764. I think that is one of the conditions made of giving the prize?—Yes, it is.

11,765. That it must not be merely a fancy farm, but that it must be carried on to an advantage?—Not at a loss, at all events.

11,766. That it must be carried on to a profit?—Yes.

11,767. Did you go over any of these farms in your present visit?—I went through one of them, the third

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prize farm. I found it a very useful farm, and fairly cultivated.

11,768. Do you know whether the rent in that case had been reduced?—It had been reduced during the last two or three years—about three years ago I understood.

11,769. Do you know what rent he was paying?—At the present time?

11,770. Yes?—I was told, not by the gentleman himself, for he was rather reticent with regard to what he was doing, but by an agent, that he would be paying from 22*s.* to 25*s.* per acre.

11,771. A fair rent?—About a fair rent.

11,772. What district was that farm in?—That was between Stratford and Warwick.

11,773. Was it in the very best district, or in the medium district?—It was in the medium district.

11,774. Then at paragraph 39 you say, "A gentleman of much experience writes, 'Devon and Cornish 'men have come here in numbers, and hold their 'own'"?—Yes.

11,775. Did you see any of the farms held by these Devon and Cornish men?—No, I did not see any of those.

11,776. But you heard that they were holding their own?—I quoted the gentleman's words from the report of the steward.

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11,777. Would it not have been well to ascertain what they are doing, how they are cultivating their land—how they are making their land pay?—It might have been, but I may say, as I said in the commencement of my report, that the season is rather unpropitious for going over farms. There was snow on the ground a good deal of the time, and the weather was unkind. I got a great quantity of replies.

11,778. Do you know what district these Devon and Cornish men were farming in?—In the medium district.

11,779. The cases that you mention seem to show that it is possible, at all events, in the medium district, for men to farm the land with advantage?—I should not think to any great advantage, but, as far as I could judge, from what I heard, and, in fact, from what I saw, with a great deal of care and the greatest economy it was possible not to lose a great deal of money, simply because many of those farms grow little or no wheat at all.

11,780. Evidently a change of a serious character has come over the district; the farmers could no longer cultivate the land to an advantage growing wheat only, or mainly, and a change was necessary; but apparently some farmers have come in and made the thing pay?—I do not think that these new farmers have changed in the mode of cultivation more than those who remain on the same class of land. If you will excuse me saying so, I do not think they have brought any specially new ideas with regard to farming.

The witness withdrew.

Dr. W. Fream.

Dr. WILLIAM FREAM called and examined.

Andover district. Average rent.

11,781. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I gather from your report as Assistant Commissioner upon the Andover district of Hampshire that there has been a very heavy fall of rent in that district?—Exceedingly heavy.

11,782. You say in paragraph 13, a farmer stated to you, "It has come to this, you may regard the land as practically of no value, and look upon the rent as merely covering the interest on the outlay on house and buildings." Is it largely the case, should you say, in the Andover district, that the landowner is really getting not more than the interest on his outlay?—Yes, I am afraid that statement applies very widely.

11,783. And I should think a good deal less than the interest on his outlay in a great many cases?—A good deal less in many cases.

11,784. Have you ever calculated what a landowner should get in the way of interest upon his capital upon an acre on an average estate managed in the ordinary way? I have heard it stated by a competent authority that as much as 1*l.* an acre should be got by the landlord in order to recoup him on what he has done?—It is a question that I have considered. Of course the value of the house enters into the calculation, but, as a rule, it is left out by the tenant farmer.

11,785. I presume that a rent of 1*l.* an acre in the Andover district is quite exceptional?—Now it is. I think I have stated in my report what is the general rental of the neighbourhood.

11,786–87. Is it half that?—10*s.* an acre. There is a case mentioned on page 8. "Land lying south-west of Andover, that let 30 years ago for from 15*s.* to 20*s.* an acre in addition to tithe, is only letting at 5*s.* now, tithe free."

11,788. Do you think 10*s.* an acre would represent the average rent of the district?—I should think it would more than represent it

Tithe.

11,789. The landowner paying the tithe?—Yes.

11,790. Is the tithe a comparatively high one?—It runs to something like 4*s.* 6*d.*, I think, taking the county generally, or the district rather, as a whole.

11,791. (*Mr. Little.*) Is that the commuted, or the present value?—The present value.

11,792. (*Viscount Cobham.*) It is quite clear that the landowners are receiving in such cases next to nothing?—Even less where they have to pay the tithe, I am afraid, and the rent does not equal it.

Value of land.

11,793. We had it from one of the local witnesses that he knew of land in the Andover district that could be bought for 2*l.* an acre. Do you confirm that opinion?—I should think that is quite possible; in fact I believe there is some land in the district quite unsaleable at present, between Andover and Basingstoke.

Dr. W. Fream.

11,794. It is more or less adapted for sporting, is it not?—Yes; I refer in my report to that very point.

11,795. But still for sporting purposes it would be necessary to keep part of the land, at all events, in cultivation?—Yes, and there would be some covert necessary.

Cost of labour.

11,796. Then, from what you say in paragraph 13, it appears that the cost of labour has gone up in that district, rather than fallen?—Yes, up to last year.

11,797. The wages bill of a good farm near Andover formerly let for 560*l.*, now tenanted at 320*l.*, has gone up 100*l.* during 25 years?—Yes, I found it to be very generally the case that during the last quarter of a century wages have increased, and the quality of the labour is not so good.

11,798. Has the quality of the labour so much deteriorated that more labourers have to be kept?—That may possibly be the case.

11,799. But as a rule I imagine that the farmers have been reducing the labour on the farms in such a depressed district as this, is that not so?—Yes, the reduction of labour was commencing last Michaelmas, but not till then.

11,800. Then you give another instance of a large farm of 1,100 acres, and there in 1892 the labour bill was 887*l.*, as compared with only 868*l.* in 1875; is it not, arguing from your general experience, rather exceptional that in a thoroughly depressed district the labour bill should be, if anything, somewhat increased?—Of course this present depression has only become acute in the Andover district within the last year or two, and wages have been steadily approaching a maximum, which was reached, we will say, at the beginning of last year.

11,801. Were the farmers not hit in 1879 and subsequent years?—Not in 1879 as they were in 1893. This is a district which can stand a great deal of wet weather. It is the drought that punishes a country like the Andover country, which is almost entirely situate upon the chalk.

11,802. Have not the rents fallen ever since 1879?—Yes. I think I have given instances (*see* page 22) in which rents have fallen.

11,803. Still, as judged from the labour bill the farmers have been spending as much in recent years as at any other time?—Yes, quite as much, I think.

Small holdings.

11,804. In the paragraph relating to small farms you quote the instance of a farm of 250 acres being broken up into a dozen small holdings ranging from 3 acres to 150 acres in size. Were all those small holdings provided with buildings by the landowner?—I think so—farm buildings; of course, there were no residences.

11,805. The tenants incurred no capital outlay in respect to buildings?—No, I believe not.

11,806–07. Did they reside upon their holdings?—No, I think they resided in the village. There may have been one or two houses on the largest of these small holdings.

11,808. At the present time, I see, all except one of the tenants follow some other occupation, but were they originally small farmers and nothing else?—I believe they were, but they found it was impossible to hold on.

11,809. Did you see that place?—I saw the place; I visited it. The buildings were left in a very sad state of dilapidation. Evidently there is not sufficient capital to enable the holders to keep them in repair.

11,810. Of what quality was the land?—Fairly good for the district; some of the best land in the district.

Characteristics of district.

11,811. Has much of this arable land of a thin description resting on chalk been ploughed up within the last 50 years in the Andover district?—I believe the original breaking up of that land dates back to about the time of the Peninsular War in the early years of this century. That is when it is believed the great mischief was done in that country, by breaking up the old down land when the price of wheat offered such a great inducement to cultivators.

11,812. Would you be of opinion that it cannot go back into permanent pasture?—It would take many years to re-establish it as pasture of the same quality as that which it originally was.

11,813. Quite an indefinite time?—Yes, quite indefinite.

11,814. Still, originally it was, I suppose, good pasture?—Yes, fine down turf—most admirable sheep pasture.

11,815. You saw some land going back to grass, no doubt?—Yes, unfortunately I saw a great deal.

11,816. But it was growing next to nothing?—Growing scarcely anything at all. In some cases the "seeds" crop was allowed to remain, and the farmer never troubled to plough it up; in other cases the stubble was not removed, and the land was allowed to become grassed over.

11,817. Were they feeding beasts with cake?—The cattle and sheep that I saw on those lands I do not think were getting any cake at the time.

11,818. You do not think that a farmer would be encouraged to spend any money on such lands?—I do not think so. All the cattle I saw on these lands were quite rough beasts, that would live on the commonest herbage.

The corn returns.

11,819. As to the Corn Returns Act, referred to in paragraph 60, on page 15, the instance quoted there by a farmer as to the fluctuations of price at Winchester market must be a very exceptional case, must it not?—I took great pains to get a correct account of that case. I believe it is quite correct. It was given to me by a man of very wide experience.

11,820. I see that A. sold to B. 100 quarters of barley at 24*s*. the quarter, which included the cost of getting it to market, I presume?—Of course it would not be at the market; it would have been on his farm at that time. He sold it in the market at 24*s*. a quarter.

11,821. Still he would have to deliver it to the buyer?—That comes subsequently; but he would have to deliver it, as a matter of course.

11,822. B. at once sold it at an advance of 1*s*. to C., who disposed of it at a further advance of 2*s*.?—Yes.

11,823. And eventually D. sold it at a figure which included the freight to a railway station?—Yes; as a matter of fact from Winchester to Bristol.

11,824. Do you know what the freight would have been?—No; I could not tell you that.

11,825. At all events he made some profit?—Yes; he would make a profit; these were all one day's transactions.

11,826. Is that not a very exceptional case of fluctuation in one market?—I do not know. I believe corn merchants do make fortunes in this way.

11,827. It would seem as if the farmer was a very poor seller?—That may be so; but I should like to say, respecting this case, that I believe it is perfectly genuine. It was given to me on most excellent authority, and I checked the figures after putting them on paper.

11,828. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Were the sales in the same market?—They were in the same market.

11,829. On the one day?—On the same day.

11,830. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Did you know this district before you went there this time?—I knew the chalk country pretty well; but I had not an intimate acquaintance with the country round Andover.

Uncultivated land.

11,831. Then you cannot say whether the cultivation generally has fallen off very much or not?—It has fallen off in this way, that the outlying fields which used to be tilled are not now tilled; they are not cultivated.

11,832. In paragraph 12 on page 7 you say, "In "some localities the land is looked upon as exhausted." Will that apply to the arable land, or to the pasture land, or to what?—That would be the arable land.

11,833. Is that not being properly manured?—I should say it would be primarily due to the original poverty of the soil. It is a very poor soil at the best of times; and though a grateful soil for treatment, farmers have not been able to spend much money on the land of late years.

11,834. Therefore, in that district it would take a good deal to get that sort of land up again, I suppose?—Yes, it would indeed.

Sale by live-weight.

11,835. Did you hear an expression of opinion whether it was desirable or not for cattle and sheep to be sold by weight—both store and fat cattle?—It was never mentioned to me in the district.

11,836. Not once?—Not once.

Slaughter of foreign cattle.

11,837. Was any mention made to you as regards cattle diseases, or the desirability of all cattle coming from abroad being slaughtered at the ports?—I found scarcely any interest taken in that question either.

Dairying.

11,838. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) There would not be much dairy farming in that district, I take it?—Scarcely any.

11,839. You have a paragraph about it in which you say an attempt was made?—Yes, and that attempt has proved abortive.

11,840. Would that be because of the soil and surroundings not being suitable?—I should imagine so; it was certainly not due to any lack of capital for there was plenty of capital behind this attempt. It is essentially a wheat and sheep country, and is not adapted for dairy farming.

11,841. (*Chairman.*) That was a case on a very large scale; the attempt was made on a farm of 1,200 acres, but would it be possible in the case of smaller farms?—Yes, it would to some extent where there are water meadows, and I think elsewhere I have mentioned such cases.

11,842. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) I was going to say that where there was a portion of water meadow such a farm would be suitable for dairy farming?—Yes, that is so, then they can adopt dairy farming, but where they have no water meadows it is almost impossible.

11,843. Water meadows are a very great help to hill farms?—Yes, and they have been specially so in the last two or three seasons.

11,844. But they are limited in extent?—Yes.

Rates.

11,845. There does not seem to be any very great complaint as to the local taxation in the district that you visited, so I gather from your report?—They complained a good deal of the highway rate in this district.

11,846. Do they know that the great part of the highway rate as far as regards the main roads is recouped by the Imperial Exchequer?—No. I am afraid that the local knowledge on these points is very limited.

11,847. And, therefore, such knowledge ought to be distributed?—It ought to be distributed, certainly.

11,848. They cannot complain of the roads which are not main roads, because those are mainly used for farm purposes?—Of course, they mend those themselves.

11,849. You point out in paragraph 22 that if the local rates were all taken off that would not very much benefit them?—Quite so. I felt it necessary to put that question to a farmer who had made a number of complaints to me. The fullest relief of local taxation would not meet this trouble from which they suffer.

Tithe.

11,850. One question as to paragraph 22, which deals with the assessment of tithe to the tenant, the landlord paying it too; you say there that it is virtually paid twice in some cases?—Yes.

11,851. It ought not to be paid so; it ought to be deducted from the tenant's assessment?—Quite so.

11,852. Do you think it is paid twice in many cases?—I have no concrete example that I could adduce at the present moment, but this case was put to me in the manner in which I have reported it to the Commission, and I should think that cases may arise in which through some negligence or ignorance of the law an amount may be paid twice over.

The corn returns and tithe.

11,853. (*Mr. Giffen.*) With regard to the corn returns, do complaints come to you from the farmers, am I to understand?—Not entirely. This particular case that I have quoted about the re-sale in Winchester market came from a corn dealer in larger practice.

11,854. But the corn dealer is not concerned in the matter, is he?—No, but he was good enough to give me a great deal of information, and amongst that information was this particular case.

11,855. The question I am putting is with reference to those members of the agricultural community who are interested in this grievance; is it the farmers who made the complaints to you of the thing as a grievance?—I think the farmers were fairly indifferent in the matter; I do not think the farmers regarded it as a grievance except in so far as it might give a more rosy view of their position than was actually correct. They say that if the price of corn is returned at an artificial value, people will get an idea that they are in a better position than they really are.

11,856. That is to say, that the Gazette average prices are not true, and that it affects the farmer unfavourably in that manner?—Yes.

11,857. That is the idea?—Yes.

11,858. It is not a question of the bearing of these things upon the tithes, is it?—Yes, I found that; I found that tithe receivers who had to pay taxes on tithes were especially eager with regard to this matter.

11,859. That is to say the landowners were interested?—Yes.

11,860. But not the farmers?—Not the farmers.

11,861. Then the diminution of the tithes would not relieve the farmer to any extent—of course that would be a question of rent?—Yes, quite so.

11,862. Assuming it to be a complaint by some persons interested in agriculture, have you considered at all the question whether these complaints are in effect just, and whether the remedies which you mention in paragraphs 61 and 62 ought to be adopted?—I did get the impression that the return should be made by the grower, and by him alone.

11,863. I suppose you are aware that when the tithe commutation was fixed in 1836, the returns were made exactly in the same way that they are now?—Yes, I am aware of that.

11,864. And that they were turned to use for a purpose in which it was necessary to take the market price (in which re-sales had to be included), namely, that they were taken for the sliding scale of corn duties?—Yes, I am aware of that fact, but among the people I have met I do not think any of them know anything about it. It is just one of those cases which Mr. Whitehead has mentioned on which greater local information is necessary.

11,865. If the total rentcharge were fixed upon market prices of that nature, would it not of itself, if you were to change the returns which you are making, necessitate that you should begin with a change in the commutation so that you should do no injustice?—Yes, I quite admit the force of that argument. I should only like to say that the farmers themselves, the wheat growers, look upon this return so far as it affects them, as merely showing the money which wheat is bringing into the market, and that the effect of the wheat sales is to give a better complexion to the wheat market than it should have.

11,866. As far as the tithe payer is concerned you would hardly think it would be just, if the system of taking the returns is to be changed, that it should be changed unless you begin by considering what the original tithe settlement had been?—Quite so.

11,867. That would apply to some extent to the complaint of the farmers as well, that if you were to change the basis you ought to consider a great many circumstances which are perhaps not referred to here, is that not so?—Yes, that is quite my opinion.

The corn returns.

11,868. Then with regard to these prices again, assuming the case that you give to be a true one completely, and that it is not a thing to be disputed, is it not rather the case that by including these four different prices in the return, the farmer's position generally is shown to be more favourable to the farmer than if the Gazette price had been 32*s.*, which was really the market price of the day?—That 32*s.*, I might point out, includes the railway carriage from Winchester to a distant station—Bristol, I believe it was.

11,869. It was the highest price?—It was the highest price including delivery.

11,870. It was the highest price of that day?—Including delivery; of course if that had been sold for delivery, we will say up in Scotland, to put an extreme case, the price would have been much higher, because the freight would have been greater.

11,871. Still, taking one with another, the prices included in the Gazette return do include the freight to the place of delivery; that is the mode of dealing in the market, and that has always been the case?—I do not know about that. I think grain may be sold on the spot or it may be sold delivered; in the one case the buyer pays the freight, and in the other case the seller does.

11,872. Surely those interested in these prices must be well aware that all these qualifications have to be included, and the landowner knows quite well that these prices do not show the money which the grower actually gets, but they show the course of the market according to the usual conditions?—Yes.

11,873. So that by including in the return, not merely the best price of the day, but all the other prices, the farmers' position is shown more accurately than if the true market price alone was shown?—I scarcely think the farmer himself—I mean the wheat grower—would admit that.

11,874. Is it not evident, on the face of it, that that farmer was a bad seller, all these prices being in the market on the one day?—That is quite possible.

11,875. The farmers generally get the benefit of these bad sales made by a particular grower, because they show a lower average price for wheat or barley than would otherwise be shown?—Yes; but we must remember that the farmer stands in the market a solitary unit, without any co-operation, whereas the dealers are a confederated band, if one might so term them.

11,876. Still the farmer is not penalised to that extent, I should think; there is a difference here between 24*s.*—and I will not say the 32*s.*—but 27*s.*, which seems to be a very large difference?—Yes, it is a wide margin, and that is why I reported the case; it seemed to me such an extraordinary one.

11,877. Then, if it is not a usual case, if it is an exceptional case, the result would be that the Gazette average prices are not so far wrong?—I could not say that; of course the average price in this case was 27*s.*

11,878. Would it not be the case that, in order to prove that the Gazette average prices are materially wrong, you would require to have a very large proportion of the corn sold in the market dealt with in this manner, and that the difference between the first price and the last price should be very considerable? If the cases are few, then the Gazette averages will not be much affected?—I quite admit that.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

11,879. (*Mr. Clay.*) You seem to have had very little evidence given you to help your report regarding a very important question just now, the Agricultural Holdings Act. I am referring to paragraph 55, page 14 of your report?—Yes.

11,880. Did you inquire into the working of that Act in the district?—Yes, I did, very fully.

11,881. You have not given us much report here?—Simply because I found that very little interest was taken in it—that was the reason.

11,882. Why was that?—Primarily, because the farmers said they did not understand it; in the second place, because they find it an expensive Act to set in motion.

11,883. Have the farmers any other mode of getting compensation, through their private arrangements for instance?—They are contented to go by what is termed the custom of the country.

11,884. Do you know what the custom is?—Yes. I could not give you the details offhand; but it is a well recognised Hampshire custom.

11,885. Is it fair and reasonable?—The farmers are contented with it, I think, locally.

11,886. You cannot give us a detailed report upon it?—No, I could not. There is some custom with regard to sainfoin. Sainfoin is a very important crop down there, and that always comes into a letting or a leaving transaction.

Compensation for home-grown produce.

11,887. The report suggests an amendment in the Act, because the farmers in that district think that the produce they grow, and consume on the holding, should be allowed in the Agricultural Holdings Act for compensation?—Yes, that point was put to me upon several occasions.

11,888. Do you agree with that, that the corn grown should be included in the claim?—We are in a transition period just now with respect to that point, because I think during the last year or two there has been a great deal more wheat fed, in one way or another, than in any previous year.

11,889. Is it not likely, as far as you know and see, that the wheat now will come more into use for making beef and mutton, and for stock, than it has been in the past?—It may very likely be so.

11,890. Does it not all point in that direction?—Certainly.

11,891. In England especially?—No, I should say in the Andover district generally.

11,892. Is it the general idea that the price of wheat is gradually lowering?—Yes.

11,893. Do you see any prospect, in view of the competition which we have from abroad, that wheat is ever likely to return to its old price?—No; they do not look for a return to the old prices.

11,894. If not, will it not be therefore used more for feeding purposes?—If they continue growing wheat at all, but that is the problem.

11,895. It is grown more for consumption by the stock?—Yes.

11,896. In that way do you not think it is fair and reasonable that that wheat should be allowed to be incorporated in the compensation to an outgoing tenant?—That is the point that was put before me. I find a good many farmers are in favour of the inclusion of wheat.

11,897-901. The fertility of the farm is more largely kept up if the wheat that he grows is consumed on the farm?—Yes.

11,902. Therefore on that ground is it not more reasonable that these things should be brought into play, and incorporated upon the compensation basis in going out of the farm?—Yes.

11,903. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Among these farmers who thought they ought to get compensation for home-grown produce consumed on the farm, did any of them propose to you any practical way in which the interest of all parties should be guarded?—No, I do not remember any case in which a farmer gave me what might be called working details.

Farmers' accounts.

11,904. I notice that in that district the farmers hardly kept any accounts, at any rate that they did not keep accurate accounts?—That is so.

11,905. So that there would be a great difficulty in proving what had been consumed on the place; and therefore the suggested amendment of the Act would entail the keeping of accurate accounts in connection with the produce?—Yes; I think all the farmers there know, of course, how much wheat they get from the threshing machine, for example; they all keep a record of that, and of any other grain that they thresh out; they would know to a bushel, I should imagine, how much it was.

11,906. Do they keep accurate accounts of what they sell? From your report I would judge that they do not keep them, except just a memorandum?—I am afraid there is nothing, except a pocket book and the bank book.

Characteristics of district and prospects.

11,907. (*Mr. Little.*) The district round Andover is principally one marked out by nature for large farms, is it not?—Yes, quite so.

11,908. The cultivation of that land must be mainly for the purpose of growing corn and sheep?—Corn and sheep are the great staples of that country.

11,909. They have both fallen exceedingly in value?—Yes, exceedingly so.

11,910. There is no great chance of the land being devoted to any other purpose?—The only alternative I see is grass of some kind, but it is not land that takes kindly to grass.

11,911. It would be a long process to get it into profitable cultivation as grass?—Yes, it would indeed, and it would be very costly.

11,912. If the present prices continue, a good deal of the land must go out of cultivation?—Some of it has already gone out of cultivation; more will do so.

11,913. If these prices continue, the area must be extended?—I think so.

Reduced estate rental.

11,914. In Appendix G you have shown us the effect upon one landlord in the shape of the rental. It seems that the rent reached the highest point in this table in 1877, when it was 7,916*l.*?—Yes.

11,915. In 1891 it had come down to 5,129, which is a reduction of nearly 35 per cent.?—Yes.

11,916. In the next year it had come down to 4,463*l.*, which is a reduction of 44 per cent.; you can take the percentages from me?—Yes.

11,917. And in 1893 it has come down to 3,626*l.* which is 54 per cent.?—Yes.

11,918. And there is no certainty that we have got to the bottom yet?—None whatever. I should like to say that it is a very good estate.

11,919. It seems to have been, within a very small quantity, the same quantity of land throughout, there are 100 acres less now, but only that difference?—Yes, a very slight difference indeed.

Reduced value of produce.

11,920. Now on page 8 you have given an account of the corn and seed sold from a large farm for a series of years, from 1875 to 1891. I find on comparing the different periods, that for the first six years, the average amount was 1,782*l.*; for the next six years 1,609*l.*; and for the last five years 1,390*l.*; that is, in the last period of five years, 22 per cent. less was received on those articles alone, than was received in the first seven?—Yes, I think it would work out to that.

11,921. Then you have given in another Appendix (page 20, from 1872–1892), the comparative prices of sheep, and from that it would appear that the value of sheep has decreased at least as much as corn?—Quite so.

11,922. That would sufficiently account for the depression unless the farmer had been able to decrease his expenditure?—Quite so.

Cost of labour.

11,923. The expenditure on labour, to which Lord Cobham referred, is compared in the same statement, on page 6. It seems that in the last six years labour has cost just as much as it did in the first six, or within a fraction; for the last six years it was on an average 900*l.*, as against 919*l.* for the first six years?—Yes.

Particulars of farm accounts.

11,924. So that there is no great decrease in the total amount paid for labour. Now, I refer you to some accounts on page 19, which seem to be the accounts of a gentleman who occupies his own land, and who has done so for many years. They are summarised for three periods of seven years each. I find that the total receipts for the first seven years were 18,481*l.*, and that the wages were 3,964*l.*, that is about 21½ per cent. of the whole receipts?—Yes.

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11,925. Then in the next seven years the receipts were 15,190*l*., and the wages 4,057*l*., that is 26 per cent.?—Yes.

11,926. In the next period of seven years the receipts were 15,317*l*., and the wages 4,516*l*., that is nearly 30 per cent.; so that of the total produce, wages took 21 per cent., roughly, in the first seven years, and 30 per cent. in the last seven. Then I will ask you to compare the amount which was available for the landlords' rent and the tenants' profit, that is the balance in this account, the man being his own tenant. There is an average yearly balance of 1,246*l*. in the first seven years to cover rent and tenants' profit; am I correct?—Yes, that is so.

11,927. And the yearly average of wages is 566*l*.?—Yes.

11,928. That is to say, wages were in ratio to rent and tenants' profit, as 45½ to 100?—Yes.

11,929. In the next seven years the wages average annually 579*l*. as against 684*l*., the balance; that is to say, the ratio of wages to the landlords' and tenants' profit is as 84 to 100?—Quite so.

11,930. In the next seven years the wages average annually 645*l*., and the landlords' and tenants' share is 323*l*., the ratio of wages to rent and tenants' profit being as 200 to 100?—Yes, just double.

11,931. That is a correct inference from the accounts that you give?—Yes. In the earlier period, when he let the cows, we have the advantage in the balance in favour of the dairy. When he let the cows there was a clear profit coming in which, in the later years, when he kept them himself, would not be shown.

11,932. (*Chairman.*) The actual receipts from the dairy are very much greater in the latter years; they average 687*l*. in the last seven years, as against 308*l*. in the first seven years?—Yes.

Rates.

11,933. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Did you have any evidence as to whether the rates in the pound had gone down, or not, in Hampshire?—My impression was that the rates had gone up, but that the assessment had been lowered.

11,934. It appears from Mr. Fowler's return of last year that up to 1891, speaking of Hampshire as a whole, there had been a heavy fall in the rate in the pound, but you did not have any specific figures, did you?—If I had them, they are here in the Report.

11,935. I do not think there are any?—No, I find there are not.

11,936. In paragraph 22, you say, "A farmer of "800 acres for the last 40 years said, that at the best, "such relief would only benefit him to the extent of "30*l*. a year," that comes out to 9*d*. per acre, which is pretty low?—He said "30*l*. a year, or so," which is a rough approximation.

11,937. I think, as a matter of fact, the rates, certainly until the last year or two, have not been high in Hampshire, as a whole; you have had no complaints that the rates are high, have you?—No, I have not. It was not so much a complaint of high rates as a complaint of the rates being in existence at all.

Uncultivated land.

11,938. Do you know any land in the neighbourhood of Andover that has gone out of cultivation owing to the tithe?—There is a big estate between Andover and Basingstoke, most of which, I think, is out of cultivation; or at all events some 6,000 or 7,000 acres.

11,939. Do you attribute that to the tithe?—Partly, no doubt, to that, and partly to the very bad prices for wheat and sheep.

Tithe.

11,940. You say in paragraph 50 that "The nationalization of the tithe" was advocated. What is intended exactly by that?—It was a phrase used to me by one or two tenant farmers. The idea was that the nation, the Government, should purchase or redeem the tithe in some way. I have gone into that point a little more fully in my report on the Maidstone district of Kent.

11,941. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) May I ask whose estates you visited in this district?—I visited, amongst others, the Red Rice Estate, the Tedworth Estate, the Stratton Estate, the Laverstoke Estate, those would be Sir John Kelk's, Lord Northbrook's, and Mr. Portal's.

11,942. (*Chairman.*) Did you go over Lord Northbrook's estate?—Yes.

11,943. Did you see Mr. Caird?—He was away, but I saw his farm. I went over his farm.

11,944. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Did you find that the landlord and tenant were generally on fairly good terms in this part?—Yes, I found very little evidence of bad feeling.

Ground game.

11,945. I see in your report, that complaints were made to you of the damage done by ground game?—Yes.

11,946. In paragraph 57, page 14, you say, "One "tenant stated that hares from an adjacent covert "belonging to the landlord, had this season, well nigh "destroyed his mangel, which at the best was a "poor plant." Why did he not avail himself of the Ground Game Act, and send those hares to market, to compensate himself for the loss?—I do not suppose that he knew he could.

11,947. Has he contracted out of it?—I think many of the tenants in the neighbourhood have made some agreement.

11,948. Are they satisfied with the agreements they have made?—I presume, that if they make agreements they must be satisfied; but in this particular case, where the mangel was destroyed, I do not suppose that gentleman had ever read the Ground Game Act, or knew what he could do under it.

11,949. The tenant you mean?—Yes, the tenant.

11,950. Was he compensated by his landlord?—Are you referring to the case where the mangel was destroyed?

11,951. Yes?—I do not think he was.

11,952. Would that be a large field?—Yes, I dare say he had all the mangel he would grow in that field. It would be about a dozen acres, as far as I remember, and it was bordered on one side by a large covert.

11,953. What would that mean now in the way of loss to the farmer: what would it represent?—It is difficult to say what the prospective loss was, because mangel is especially valuable this season. It was a greater loss last year than it would have been in most years. There was not much mangel left by the drought, and what there was left these rabbits seem to have appropriated.

11,954. Was this farm in particular overstocked with ground game would you say?—Yes.

11,955. Is it true that some of the landlords in this part of the country turn out the ground game at a certain time of the year?—I did not hear that.

11,956. You did not?—I did not hear that.

11,957. On this particular estate, where this field of mangel was that was complained of, does the landlord himself shoot, or does he let the shooting?—This estate belongs to a nobleman in the neighbourhood, and I should almost think that he would himself shoot, but I do not know for a fact.

11,958. (*Chairman.*) Did you hear of any general complaints in the districts that landlords compel their tenants to contract themselves out of the Ground Game Act?—No, I cannot say that the complaints were general in that respect; in fact, in many cases I heard the tenant farmers speak very well of the Ground Game Act. They thought it had been a great boon to them. But there are other cases in which I presume, some private arrangements have been made, the nature of which I did not ascertain, which seemed to have placed the tenant in an unfortunate position.

11,959. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) In this particular case that you mention, where the tenant complains of this field, are you prepared to give the landlord's name, or the name of the tenant?—I do not know whether the tenant would like that.

11,960. Would you give the name of the tenant?—The tenant of that farm wrote the letter quoted in paragraph 71 of my report, but his name is not given there.

11,961. (*Chairman.*) Would he desire that his name, and that of his landlord, should be given?—I should hardly think so, because I must say that, in getting my evidence most farmers requested me not to give their names, and I think if this gentleman had given me permission to use his name, I should have put it at the end of the letter.

11,962. Have you examined the case yourself personally?—Yes; I saw the farmer who wrote the letter quoted in paragraph 71. I called upon him, and I had some talk with him. He is the same farmer who complained of his mangel being destroyed. He subsequently wrote me that letter, because he was going away that day by train, and I had only about 20 minutes conversation with him, and so he supplemented our conversation with this letter.

11,963. (*Mr. Everett.*) On page 12, paragraph 45 speaking of a farmer who purchases a great deal of foreign barley, you say, "This barley grittled and mixed with chaff," and so forth. I want to ask you what is the meaning of that word "grittled"?—It means passed through a mill with the jaws set wide apart. It is coarsely ground barley, coarsely broken.

Existence of depression.

11,964. (*Chairman.*) I presume this district has suffered a very great deal during the last two years?—Very greatly.

11,965. First, from the low temperature of 1892, resulting in a very bad harvest, and, secondly, from the drought of 1893?—Yes, more particularly from the drought of 1893.

11,966. Previous to that it had suffered to a less degree from the low prices?—Yes, it had done so.

11,967. And the fact that the land is mainly suitable for growing wheat?—Yes, and breeding sheep; the two things are worked in together.

11,968. In both of which the prices had fallen considerably?—Yes, they have fallen enormously.

11,969. Especially in the case of wheat?—Yes, and unfortunately, last year, in the case of sheep too. It is a great ram-breeding district, and the Hampshire Down rams made very poor prices last season.

Change of system of cultivation.

11,970. Of course the question under these circumstance is: What change can be made in the system of cultivation to meet the new conditions consequent upon the fall of prices? That is the problem in that district—how to meet the fall of prices by some change of cultivation?—Yes, and it is a very serious problem.

11,971. Can you say whether any change is taking place in that direction which is likely to lead to good results?—The change, I am sorry to say, is an unsatisfactory one; it is really abandoning the poor land and concentrating their efforts upon the remaining land of the farm.

11,972. Did you find cases of farmers who were making the change successfully?—In one or two cases where there are water meadows, I think the farmers are weathering the times better, perhaps, than where there are not water meadows.

11,973. Of course farms with water meadows would be exceptional cases, but can you call to mind any men without water meadows, who have succeeded in making the change?—No, I cannot call to mind any such case.

11,974. You say, in paragraph 46, "If there are any "men who, as pure farmers, have done better than "their neighbours, they are those who have practised "extreme frugality, and exercised the greatest care, "and also men who have attained the highest excel- "lence in the art of agriculture, and who possess both "the experience and the capital to enable them to do "their land well, and to get good returns. I had the "pleasure of meeting two or three such men." Did you go over the farms of those men?—Yes, I went over one of the farms.

11,975. Where is that?—About four miles from Andover. I might call your attention to this, that I have mentioned two qualifications—experience and capital. I know that in these particular cases the men have money behind them. That, of course, gives them confidence, and they will do things which a poor farmer dare not do—they do not mind facing the risk sometimes.

11,976. Were these men doing well?—I would not like to go so far as to say they were doing well, but they were certainly doing better than their neighbours.

11,977. I think you said you went over Mr. Caird's farm?—Yes.

11,978. Do you know whether he has been carrying on his business to a profit?—I could not say that. I have not had an opportunity of talking with him, except for about a moment, since I was there, but I noticed that his work was being exceedingly well done, in fact, he seemed to have introduced there some of the best methods of Scottish farming.

11,979. It seems so very important to ascertain what changes of cultivation men are making who are really doing well, and then to consider whether that might be extended in the district?—Yes, I am afraid there is very little initiative in this district; the farming is what one might term monotonous; it is very uniform in character. Wheat and sheep, as I have already mentioned, are the great staples, and the occupiers lay themselves out for the cultivation of wheat, and the breeding of sheep, and one farmer is like another.

11,980. Of course, that form of cultivation, when carried on exclusively, is unprofitable?—Yes

11,981. Therefore, it becomes all the more important to consider what changes can be made so as to give a reasonable hope to farmers of making a profit, and so it would seem to be extremely desirable to investigate those cases where farmers are doing fairly well, and where they have been able to make changes in their cultivation?—There is a case in point here somewhere in the report—I do not know whether I can put my finger on it at once. It is the case of a very good farmer. I went over his farm, and had a long conversation with him, and he told me that this last season he was giving up sheep breeding. He said, "I shall not "keep a wet flock this winter; I shall keep a dry "flock. It will pay me much better, and I shall buy "what lambs I want. I shall let other men breed the "lambs, and lose 10*s.* a head on them." He is a man who trims his sails to the winds, and I have no doubt he will come out a little better at the end of the season, and will let other men continue on the old road.

11,982. That, however, scarcely seems a change of cultivation; that was a case of change of method owing to an exceptional year, of course?—Yes.

11,983. That of substituting a dry flock for—I do not know what the alternative phrase is?—A ewe flock; a wet flock; a lambing flock.

11,984. What one would like to see in this district is the case of a farmer who has changed his system of cultivation, and by doing so has been able to do well, whereas by following in the ordinary ruck, as you say, he has not succeeded?—If I might say so, in this particular case, even the change of method was a change of cultivation, because, instead of rearing the lambs, he was going to buy them. No doubt in the course of a year or two, if the sheep trade should improve, he would re-establish his wet flock.

Butter.

11,985. I see in paragraph 44, speaking of the district, you say: "Very little butter is made in the district, "save for home consumption. Some, of course, finds "its way into the tradesmen's shops in Andover, "around which town I was assured that the best and "the worst butter 'in the world' is made. The town "relies chiefly, however, upon its imported supplies "of Danish, Normandy, Australian, and New Zealand "butter, 'all of splendid quality.'" Now, one would like to know whether, in your opinion, it is possible that the town might be supplied from the district with some of the best butter, because apparently some of the best butter in the world is produced there, and some of the very worst?—Yes.

11,986. Is there any reason why the better quality of butter should not be increased in quantity at the expense of the worst?—I believe the difficulty would be in maintaining a constant supply of uniform quality. Of course, in the case of these Danish, Normandy, Australian, and New Zealand butters, people get a certain quality of butter one week; they like it, and they go and get the same quality of butter the next week; they ask for that quality, and there is an almost unlimited supply.

11,987. Has that not been achieved in Denmark by a co-operative system and by butter manufactories, by the farmers sending their milk in to a manufactory to be made into butter, and in that way arriving at a uniform quality?—I think, with regard to Denmark, the chief secret of their success was that they had a big market here for their butter.

11,988. But there is the same market for the English farmer; what one would desire to know is why the best and the worst butter should be produced in the same district, and whether it would not be possible for improvements to be effected there, so as to put these farmers in the district on the same equality as the producers of the Danish, Australian, and New Zealand butter?—With regard to that, I would like to say this, that I doubt if a large quantity of good butter could be made in the neighbourhood, because it is not a dairying country. Of course, if people want to command a market they must be prepared to supply that market regularly, and I think it is in connexion with that regularity that they would fail—they might supply them during the summer for a few weeks.

11,989. The market seems to be there?—The market is undoubtedly there.

11,990. Because you say Andover receives a considerable supply from these other countries?—Yes.

Change of system of cultivation.

11,991. Can you give to the Commission the name or names of any farmers who have changed their method of cultivation, and who have made their industry pay?—I have not my notebook with me, but the name of the gentleman who gave up breeding lambs this winter was Mr. Bailey, who lives a few miles from Andover. Another very good farmer in the district is Mr. Allen, but he combines a little pedigree short-horn breeding with his other work; he is a very shrewd man who went down into that country from Norfolk; he is one of the few immigrants into the country, who has done well; he went there as a young man some 30 or 40 years ago, and he has been there ever since, but then he has got a good farm, the land lies well, and it is a kind soil, and so forth.

11,992. You see the point, how very important it is to ascertain to what extent a change of cultivation may result in something better?—Yes, I quite see the point; but I am sorry to say that in the majority of cases these men are so bound up with wheat and sheep that you must get a new race of men to alter the farming of that country. I do not think the present men will adapt themselves to the new circumstances.

Migration of farmers.

11,993. Has there been any tendency hitherto for new men to come in from other districts?—I have mentioned a few cases. As a rule they have not done well. Some of the men who have come into the district have been out of Devonshire, and, as a rule, they have not stopped long. I believe they migrated into the Andover country, because in the east of that country there is a nobleman who has large estates in Devonshire, and he would perhaps bring some of his tenants up from his Devonshire estates to the Hampshire ones.

Butter.

11,994. Before we leave the Andover district there is one question I should like to put to you. You pointed out that Andover, a town in a purely rural district of England, is largely supplied with butter from Denmark, Australia, and New Zealand, and you have expressed some doubt as to whether the butter can be produced largely in the neighbourhood; do you think it is a satisfactory condition of things when a purely rural town in a purely rural district in England is supplied from such distant quarters with butter, might it not be supplied from districts not immediately round Andover, but from other rural districts of England?—Yes, no doubt the supply might be obtained from other districts in England, but so far as the immediate locality is concerned, it is not a dairying country, and I do not think it ever will be.

11,995. But still, going rather farther afield, one might suppose that these products might be raised there instead of being brought from these different countries?—I think so; the reason the grocers use this foreign butter is that they find they can get any quantity of it at a very short notice, and it is always of the same quality; uniformity of quality is everything in selling butter.

11,996. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is it not the least the worse for the journey?—It may be so.

11,997. But it fetches a high price?—Yes; my informant in this particular matter, paragraph 44, is a tradesman who has been engaged in the provision trade in Andover for about 50 years, and I do not think I could have had a better authority for the statement.

11,998. (*Chairman.*) The uniformity of quality appears to be one of the principal causes of the demand?—I think so.

11,999. That uniformity in quality must be obtained by combination of some kind?—Yes, I believe that is how it is obtained abroad—the butter is blended abroad.

12,000. If there was a greater combination in the dairy districts of England might not the market for English butter be greatly improved?—I think so.

Maidstone district. Condition of the hop district.

12,001. Now going to the Kentish district, you there examined into the neighbourhood of Maidstone; you found a condition of things there on the whole very superior to that of Hampshire, mainly owing, apparently, to the fact of the hop cultivation and of the fruit cultivation?—Yes, in the hop districts themselves, I found the state of affairs very much superior to what I found in Hampshire, but outside the hop country in Kent, things were almost as bad, perhaps quite as bad, as I found them in Hampshire.

12,002. But immediately around Maidstone, and, I suppose, in the Malling district you found the conditions good?—Yes, Maidstone and West Malling.

12,003. Generally in what is called the Garden of Kent?—Yes.

12,004. Just where the hops are grown you found the condition of things very good?—Yes, I found there was not very much to complain of there.

12,005. No farm is to be found there untenanted, and when the farms are vacant the landlords can find new tenants?—I believe so.

12,006. The rents appear to be low; is that so?—I do not know that they are low in the hop district itself, but outside the hop district you get poor land on the chalk, which I dare say is in quite as bad heart as much of the land in Hampshire at present.

12,007. You find that the hop growers have done well?—That is the impression I have derived.

12,008. You recollect, probably, that five or six years ago there was a committee of inquiry into the condition of the hop growers in England?—Yes, I met several hop growers who mentioned it.

12,009. At that time the hop industry was represented to be in a bad way, but since then an improvement has taken place?—I had no personal knowledge of this hop country six or seven years ago.

12,010. At all events you find they are doing well now?—I find they are certainly not in the depressed condition that many of the farmers outside the hop district are.

Fruit growing.

12,011. There has been a great extension of fruit growing in that country?—Yes, a fair extension of fruit growing.

12,012. In paragraph 32 of your report, you say, "In 1879–80, Kent had 14,685 acres in orchards and "fruit plantations. In 1891 the area of orchards alone "was 20,130 acres, which had increased to 20,528 acres "in 1892," and of small fruit 20,000 acres. Therefore the area of cultivation in orchards and fruit together had grown from 14,600 to over 40,000 acres?—Yes; from 14,600 of orchards and fruit. That would not include the small fruit, I think.

12,013. You think it would not include the small fruit?—I mention the small fruit separately, but I could not get the figures for 1879–80. I do not think they were separately returned then.

12,014. Are they not included then in the 14,600?—They might possibly have been.

12,015. At all events there has been a very great extension of fruit cultivation?—Yes, the cultivation of fruit is increasing in the county.

12,016. How did you find that industry?—I found that—to put it in a few words—the growing of the best fruit pays. What is injuring the market is the raising of inferior fruit.

12,017. Where the farmer goes in for good qualities of fruit he can be paid?—I think so.

12,018. But if he merely goes in the ordinary ruck, and produces an inferior quality, the profits are small I suppose?—Yes.

Successful hop-grow

12,019. Did you find many men in the district who made money by hops?—Yes, I believe some of the hop growers down there have made handsome fortunes. I did not get at the exact amounts, but several of them seemed to be in a position of considerable affluence, and I concluded that they had found hop growing on the whole a remunerative industry.

12,020. Did you find men who had begun with a small acreage and gradually increased their acreage of hops?—Yes, there was one notable case in which a man, I think, began with nothing many years ago, and he now grows about 200 acres of hops, and has made a fortune.

12,021. You may conclude from the gradual increase of his cultivation that he has made it pay well?—Yes, I think so.

12,022. The cultivation of hops is a very expensive one, is it not?—Yes, and quite a special one.

Cost of hop-growing.

12,023. (*Mr. Clay.*) What amount per acre does it take to grow a crop of hops?—If you will kindly look at page 41 of the Report, you will see that there I have given an estimate. I believe this estimate would be considered, as a rule, a very high one, and that is the reason I asked the gentleman who furnished me with it to allow me to use his name in connexion with it. He explained to me that he himself grew the very choicest hops of the very finest quality, and with his hop growing he also combines shorthorn breeding—he is well known as a shorthorn breeder.

12,024. (*Viscount Cobham.*) In the mid-Kent district?—That is about four or five miles from Maidstone.

Hop-growing.

12,025. (*Chairman.*) I suppose you found many cases of men farming hops exclusively—having hop gardens?—I do not know that I found many who relied solely upon hops, because in growing hops, a large quantity of manure is required, and hence it is necessary to maintain a certain head of cattle, and to keep in association with the hop-yards a fair amount of grass land. But these are all subsidiary to the hop growing.

12,026. In other cases you found, I presume, a great number of farms in which a small amount of hops was grown?—Yes, in some cases there was a very small acreage of hops indeed.

12,027. But where it is an important element in a farm?—Yes, it is the great central feature after all, if you get hops on a farm at all, I imagine.

12,028. Probably it is owing to that, that the farmer has done fairly well, as compared with the men in other districts?—Yes, I think so.

eases of op-gardens.

12,029. Are the hop gardens generally let on lease?—I believe they are. I think I have said so in the report, for the simple reason that it would scarcely pay a man to take hop land on a yearly or two-yearly agreement.

12,030. There would be too great a risk?—There would be too great a risk, and the capital required——

12,031. Is so large, and the cultivation of such a high order, that he must have the security of a lease?—That is so.

12,032. What are the leases generally?—I have mentioned them in one part of the report. I think something like 10 years.

12,033. Did you find any desire among the farmers in the district for judicial rents?—Not amongst the hop growers.

and Courts.

12,034. Or in the Andover district, did you find any general demand for it?—In about two cases in the Andover district I heard a demand for Land Courts.

12,035. Only two cases?—Two or three cases, not more than three certainly; that was rather on the Basingstoke side of Andover than in Andover itself.

12,036. You did not find any general demand?—No.

12,037. Nor in the Kent district?—Not in the hop district, but outside the hop country I did. I have mentioned it in the report on page 34, paragraph 54. I refer there to cases of the kind.

12,038. That appears to have been one case of a farmer?—Yes, but he was a very representative farmer. Although he is a hop grower, he was rather outside the hop district. He was an energetic man, and, I believe, in his conversation with me, he was expressing the views of a number of his friends.

12,039. He advocated an independent tribunal or court appointed by the Board of Agriculture with whom, in cases of raising or lowering rent, the determination should be?—Yes, that was his suggestion.

oduction manure.

12,040. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You quote a case in paragraph 64, where a man found it more profitable to get his manure from a large herd of dairy cows, rather than to feed bullocks?—Yes, that was a very interesting case. That was a farmer about two or three miles from Maidstone. Of course he had the Maidstone market close at hand for milk.

12,041. Did he make the production of milk subsidiary to the production of manure?—I think so. The production of milk was, if I might so express it, incidental to the manufacture of manure, which he used upon his hop land.

12,042. You would not think, as a general rule, that it would hold good?—No, the case seemed to me so exceptional that I thought it worth mentioning here.

12,043. Did he give the cows a large quantity of cake?—Yes, he fed them very well; he used a great deal of wheat. He was feeding his wheat, and he used the waste steam from the dairy every day for grinding up the wheat. He found that wheat freshly ground, was better feeding than stale wheat, and he said he preferred working it off in that way to selling it. He ground it up fresh every day for the cows.

Railway rates.

12,044. There is a great deal of complaint in Kent apparently about railway rates, especially among the fruit growers?—Yes, that is so.

12,045. How do they meet the argument that the foreign fruit would get to the London market by sea if it did not come by rail; did it appear to be considered by them?—I did not argue the point with them, I simply took their statements. I did not hear that suggestion at all. It might come by sea.

12,046. Of course you are aware that it is contrary to law, for the railway companies to give a preference to foreign produce as such?—I do not think they know that.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

12,047. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) With reference to the Agricultural Holdings Act as applied to the hop growing industry, it is suggested that "Part I. (Improvements to which consent of landlord is required) should be transferred to Part II. (Improvements to which consent of landlord is not required)." That is at para. 56 on page 34?—Yes.

12,048. That would mean that a tenant might put up an oasthouse, we will say, without the consent of the landlord?—Yes, that was one of the cases brought before me.

12,049. In your opinion would that be desirable?—There seemed in some cases to be a desire to have more oasthouse accommodation. It appears that in Kent many of the estates instead of being in the hands of the actual owner are in the hands of trustees, or in some way they are administered in such a manner that the tenant cannot get directly to the real owner, and then it is that difficulties arise.

12,050. If the hop-growing industry was to fail, as it has done before, these oasthouses would be practically useless to the landlord?—Quite so.

12,051. Therefore there would be an objection to that suggestion that you make in paragraph 56?—Yes, that is quite an objection that might be anticipated.

12,052. Would not the same apply to wiring hops—putting up wirework in hop growing?—Yes, I think that would hardly be included in the present schedule of the Agricultural Holdings Act. I do not know whether it would be specifically included, because it is such a modern process.

The purity of beer.

12,053. Did you have any information from hop growers as to the necessity of brewers declaring what beer is made from?—Yes, I did. I have mentioned that. Some of them were strongly in favour of a Bill which has been introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Quilter. I have mentioned that on page 38, paragraph 75, "Hop growers generally are in favour "of the Bill which has been introduced into the "House of Commons (Bill 55, 1893) 'for better "'securing the purity of beer.'" I found a very general concensus of opinion in favour of that.

12,054. That the material of which beer is made should be declared?—Yes.

12,055. Because much of quassia and other things as hop substitutes, and sugar, are used in beer making now?—Quite so; and there is a reference also in the Appendix to my Andover Report, to the same subject.

12,056. Was that opinion general among hop growers?—Yes, especially in the western side of the Maidstone district, towards Tunbridge Wells.

12,057. I think a resolution was carried lately at the Central Chamber of Agriculture on the same point?—Yes, I believe it was.

Existence of depression.

12,058. You say you have found outside the hop growing area a condition of things quite as bad as in the Andover district?—Quite as bad, I think.

12,059. On the purely corn-growing lands?—Yes, upon the hill sides, upon the chalk slopes.

12,060. Would that be because of the nature of the soil?—Yes, to some extent I should think so. They seem to have a very thin soil, not unlike the North Hampshire soil, resting upon the chalk.

12,061. Did you hear in that district that there was great trouble to collect the rates for the Union?—I did, especially between Maidstone and Ashford.

12,062. Would that be in the Hollingbourn Union?—Yes, I had forgotten the name.

12,063. In two or three parishes rates have not been collected for some time?—That is so I think I have mentioned the circumstance in my report.

12,064. Within a mile I dare say there would be comparative prosperity on account of hops and fruit?—Yes, quite so.

12,065. With regard to the railway rates and the carriage of fruit, I think you found great complaints of those in the district?—Very great dissatisfaction at the railway rates.

Railway rates.

12,066. Especially because the railway companies bring the foreign fruit from the ports cheaper than they carry English fruit?—Yes.

12,067. And at the same time they give them the advantage of quick trains, did you gather that?—Yes, I think I have almost expressed that in paragraph 70, page 37.

12,068. And the home-grown fruit is put upon slow luggage trains, did you gather that also?—No, I do not know that I had the details of that; I did know this, that the home-grown fruit was collected from station to station, and that would naturally involve a slow train, essentially so.

12,069. You found, on the whole, great complaints with regard to railway rates?—Yes; the fruit-growers especially were very indignant about the preferential railway rates, as they term them.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

12,070. (*Mr. Clay.*) Did the farmers resident in this district pay any more attention to the Agricultural Holdings Act than they did in your other district?—The farmers outside the hop country did, but not in the hop district itself.

Compensation for wiring hops.

12,071. Referring to the improvement in growing hops on the wire system, do you not think that should come under the Agricultural Holdings Act, and that compensation should be given for these wires when taken over by the incoming tenant?—The wiring of hops is such a recent introduction that I do not think it is provided for, specifically, in the present Act.

12,072. I expect the dissatisfaction with the Agricultural Holdings Act is so general in the country that it will have to be amended?—Yes.

12,073. Will you recommend that such an improvement of that kind, such an outlay by the tenant, should come under the amended Act if it is ever made?—It is such a very heavy outlay for wiring that it is a question that would require considerable thought.

12,074. If it is costly it would still be of more value to the incoming tenant than to the outgoing tenant who would have to take it away, would it not?—Quite so.

Cost of hop-growing.

12,075. (*Viscount Cobham.*) What is the cost of wiring per acre?—I have mentioned it in the report; paragraph 58, page 34, gives the cost of wiring.

12,076. On page 41 you give the cost per acre of hop cultivation at 61*l.*, but that includes only 2*l.* 10*s.* for poles or wire?—Yes. You will see that the Appendix only gives the cost of growing; you would not have there the initial cost of the installation of the wire.

12,077. That is interest?—Interest only on putting up the wires at from 20*l.* to 50*l.* per acre, the cost of which would be spread over a number of years. For instance, I say, "Another grower said he would "require a long lease, and land that would carry "hops for many years, before going to the expense "of wiring."

The Agricultural Holdings Act, compensation for wiring hops.

12,078. (*Mr. Clay.*) The Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883 was passed to enable the tenant to put increased fertility into his land. If any buildings or other things were put up, or draining done, would that not come under that category; and if he has done that, and any unexhausted improvements in these wires is left, should not the outgoing tenant receive the benefit?—I think so.

12,079. Would you, if the Agricultural Holdings Act were amended, consider that the landlord should give up that schedule?—Do you mean that Part I. should be transferred to Part II.?

12,080. Yes?—I have simply given here the opinions that I received.

12,081. The gentlemen you reported upon and the farmers were clearly of opinion that Part I. and Part II. should be grouped into one?—Yes, I found a very general opinion to that effect.

12,082. And that the building part of it should be left to the sanction of the landlord?—There again I must distinguish between the hop country and the country outside the hop lands, as I have done in the introduction to my report.

12,083. I am not talking specially about buildings. I am talking really about the Agricultural Holdings Act?—In the case of hops there is the case of oast houses to be considered, which we should not have in the districts outside the hop country.

12,084. Still the farmers you visited were inclined to have Part I. and Part II. put together?—Yes, that is so.

12,085. (*Mr. Little.*) Wiring hops is a very expensive proceeding, is it not? Hop gardens are grubbed frequently, and hops are planted on fresh grounds for various reasons?—Yes.

12,086. Might not the effect of allowing a tenant to put up wires without the consent of the landlord be to leave the landlord what was no use to him after a short time?—Yes.

12,087. That is, supposing he thought it desirable to grub the hops?—The answer to that question, I think, would be this: A hop-grower would hardly trouble to wire hops unless he was going to leave the land in hops for some time.

12,088. Suppose it occurs that he has to give up the land, and he has a claim upon his landlord for 40*l.* or 50*l.* an acre, it might be a great hardship upon the landlord to have to pay, if he did not want to keep the land in hops?—Yes, it would.

Extraordinary Tithe Act.

12,089. That is an argument in favour of retaining the proviso that the landlord's consent should be given. With regard to the Extraordinary Tithe Act, you have drawn attention to a curious omission—that there is no power to apportion this; is that so?—If I am rightly informed it is so. I discussed this point with several practical men, and I certainly got the impression which I have endeavoured to convey in my report.

12,090. You say in paragraph 43: "If, for example, out "of 100 acres of such land 25 are sold, the whole of the "extraordinary charge has to be borne by the remain-"ing 75 acres." Then, supposing another 25 was sold, would it remain on the 50?—I believe so.

12,091. And then another 25?—Yes.

12,092. And then another 20?—Yes.

12,093. So the tithe owner's property might be completely extinguished, because the land would not bear it, if by successive sales you left the whole of the charge upon the remainder of it?—Yes, I put that very point to my informants. I should like to say that my chief informants on these points were a firm of very well known land agents, who have had to deal with this subject. It was novel to me, and I expressed my surprise, but they assured me it was correct. They said no doubt the object was to force owners to redeem the tithe altogether.

12,094. I am not disputing it in the least?—I understand; I just mentioned the incident.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

12,095. Then you say in paragraph 51, with regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act, "Complications and "dissatisfaction arise out of the operation of the law "of entail." Has the present owner, who has only a life interest, to get the consent of his successor before he can approve of an improvement?—I suppose that would depend to some extent on the conditions.

12,096. Is he not the owner under the Act; has he not power to give consent?—I think the essence of that paragraph is contained in the end of it: "Even if the "consent of the successor be obtained to proposed "improvements, there is quite likely to be a lack of "the necessary means.

12,097. But that does not apply to the Agricultural Holdings Act; if he had the means he would do it himself, and the tenant would not be called upon to do it?—Yes.

12,098. I take it that the life tenant has power to give consent to an improvement, because if you remember he can, when such an improvement has to be paid for, charge the estate ?—Yes.

Rates.

12,099. (*Mr. Dalton.*) In paragraph 20 you say that "there is a tendency in all local rates to increase, "in some cases rapidly. Until the county council "came into existence, rates ran from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* in "the pound; since then they have increased con-"siderably, though this is partly due to the lowering "of assessments, 3*s.* 8*d.* in the pound, and probably "more." Where have you got that information from ?—It was given to me by a county councillor himself.

12,100. For a particular parish ?—He was on the county council of Kent.

12,101. Yes, but he would not necessarily know the rate in the pound of all the rates in the county. I have been looking at the rates in the Maidstone Union, and I find that in the poor rate, instead of there being an increase, there was a considerable fall after 1889. Does this statement apply to the whole county or to any particular union? I find several rates seem to have fallen in different parts. This is a tremendous increase; it is nearly half as much again, and I have not yet been able to find any locality in which the increase is so large, although very likely there are some places, and if we had particular places given to us we could test the figures. The county council rates, I daresay, have increased a few pence in the pound, but in the poor rate there seems to have been a general fall throughout the county, and I should have thought the highway rate would have fallen in some places ?—I do not know how far the information might be based upon the fact that the assessment is lowered; the report says, "this is partly due to the lowering of assessments."

12,102–3. Of course there may be particular parishes where that is so ?—This was given to me a little way south of Maidstone, I remember, by a county councillor himself. He was a member of the council yet he complained bitterly of the existence of the county council.

12,104. Possibly it was in his own parish ?—It might have been so.

12,105. You have some other figures. You say, in paragraph 21, "Some figures furnished to me in "connexion with the subject of local rating are repro-"duced in Appendix II." Are those figures in a particular parish ?—Yes, that is on the western side of the Maidstone district.

12,106. What parish is that ?—That would be not far from Tunbridge Wells; it is very likely Frant.

12,107. Frant is close by Tunbridge Wells, is it not ?—Yes.

12,108. Is any part of it in an urban district? At any rate it is part of the suburbs of Tunbridge Wells ?—Yes.

12,109. You would expect the rates to be higher there than in a purely rural district ?—I think it was Frant.

12,110. There are some very curious figures in that Appendix, "Tradesman doing good business, keeps three "or four horses and carts going. Assessed for poor "rate at 23*l.* 10*s.*" "Tradesman doing extensive "business, keeps five horses and carts going. Assessed "for poor rate at 12*l.* 10*s.*" Do you know what kind of tradesmen they would be ?—No, I do not. I may explain that I attended a meeting of the Tunbridge Wells Farmers' Club, and these figures were used in the course of a speech by a farmer in the neighbourhood, and I asked him for his manuscript afterwards.

12,111. You would expect a tradesman doing an extensive business to be rated, when you take his business premises and his residence into account, at a great deal more than 12*l.* 10*s.*; 12*l.* 10*s.* would have been a small cottage, I should have thought, in the parish of Frant. Do you know whether these were given as real cases, or were they hypothetical ?—These were given as real cases.

12,112. Do you think, if we were to examine the rate-book of the parish of Frant—were they all given as being in the parish of Frant ?—I am not quite certain about that, but they were very near to Tunbridge Wells, and as far as my memory serves me, it was Frant or a place close to Frant.

12,113. Could we find out ?—I could find out myself, I think. I would refer you to the original with pleasure.

12,114. Then we could get the figures up from the local people ?—I will look up the details of those and send them up.

Tithe.

12,115. Then with regard to the proposals for the tithe rentcharge, I see in paragraph 39 the proposal is that the tithe should be redeemed compulsorily—that the landlords should find one-fourth of the redemption money, the tithe owners one-fourth. What does that mean, that the tithe owners should lose a fourth, and the Government pay one-half ?—Yes.

12,116. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I suppose that means the fourth that the tithe owner has already lost ?—That was suggested. The tithe owner had already lost his —— third, somebody said. This was an idea that was suggested at a meeting that I attended, and it seemed to find general favour, so I thought it would be worth placing before the Commission. It was the only practical proposal I had—at all events, the only one approaching the practical.

Compensation for wiring hops.

12,117. (*Mr. Channing.*) I should like to ask you one or two questions about this wiring of hops and the compensation for it. Have you analysed what the cost of setting up the wire is each year in the 30*l.* or 50*l.* per acre quoted—what the value of the wire in itself is, and what the cost of the labour is. Have you separated those ?—No, I have not got the separate items, I have simply got these details as shown in paragraph 58.

12,118. You could not give us the proportion of the 50*l.* ?—That would be the cost of labour and the cost of material ?

12,119. Yes ?—I have not got that. It is an operation such that, when once performed, the wire lasts for a number of years.

12,120. You mean the wires—— ?—Are suspended permanently.

12,121. Permanently ?—Yes.

12,122. Not in the same field, you do not mean that, do you ?—Yes.

12,123. Really ?—Yes, they remain on the land from year to year.

12,124. If they remain on the same field from year to year, I want to ask this question: What is done with the land when it becomes hop-sick ?—Then, of course, everything has to go, and as I suggested just now, probably a hop grower would not go to the expense of wiring hop land that was very near the term of its continuation in hops.

12,125. Then if they claimed compensation for it, the labour and the materials would both have to be considered ?—I presume so.

Entailed estates.

12,126. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) In your Report you say that "complications and dissatisfaction arise out of "the operation of the law of entail." Are many of those estates in Kent entailed ?—Yes, I believe they are very generally.

12,127. Do the farmers think it would be to their advantage if the law of entail were abolished ?—I heard some rather violent opinions on that subject in the direction of abolition.

12,128. What do you mean by "complications and dissatisfaction" ?—I give an example immediately afterwards. It is where the existing tenant or the life tenant, for example, has certain propositions made to him in the way of improvements, and he procrastinates—he puts the question off, and says, "Well, I "do not know, very likely I shall be gone in another "year or two; I do not care about entering on "anything new, and I do not have anything to do with "my successor." Matters are brought to a deadlock in that way.

12,129. But, on the other hand, really it may be an advantage to the tenant; it means a certain amount of security, does it not ?—Cases were given to me where the new landlord or the new owner was a very different person, perhaps less liked by the tenants than the owner who had just passed away. In fact that was given to me in some cases as a reason for the determination of tenancies; the estate had passed away not from father to son, but perhaps from one landlord to another, having very little connection with the former owner; the new owner would have no sympathy with the tenants—no knowledge of them—and it would lead to a rupture of the old friendly relations which formerly subsisted.

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12,130. Are agreements made as to hop lands to cover permanent outlay for wiring?—I believe in most cases they do get the owner's permission. I did not come across a case where a tenant had wired the land at his own risk.

Ground game.

12,131. I see in your Report as to damage by rabbits that one farmer seems to have lost about 100*l*. Was this man compensated in any way by his landlord, do you know? That is mentioned in paragraph 46, page 33?—Yes, and I mention a case at the bottom of page 32, where the shooting tenant bought the crop up as it stood at 5*l*. per acre. In this particular case I did not hear of any compensation being paid. I might mention that last season rabbits were especially troublesome. On account of the drought they had very little of their natural food, and the rabbits came out, and I was told they even ate up the young bines climbing the poles.

12,132. What would be the rent of this farm that you speak of in paragraph 46?—I do not know. That fact was given to me by the agent to the landlord.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. James Hope called and examined.

Mr. J. Hope.

Scotland. Existence of depression.

12,133. (*Chairman.*) I gather from your Report as Assistant Commissioner on the counties of Perth, Fife, Forfar, and Aberdeen, that the districts of Scotland which you have inquired into have not suffered as the South of England and the East of England have suffered during the last year from drought?—I believe that is so.

12,134. On the whole they had a favourable season last year?—They had a very favourable season last year, but still I think it is going to turn out about the worst year that the farmers have had for many a long year in those counties.

Potato growing.

12,135. How is that?—Because (if you keep out Aberdeenshire) Fife, Perth, and Forfarshire are very large potato growing counties, and the potatoes of those counties have come to be quite unsaleable this year; they will not bring 30*s*. a ton.

12,136. Why is that?—Because the supply is in excess of the demand; there is no market for them, and many of the farmers use them largely for feeding. Of course that has made turnips, where they have been letting turnips, very cheap, many turnips let at 2½*d*. per week, and in some cases less; they used to bring perhaps 5*d*. or 6*d*. per week.

12,137. That would tell especially in those districts where the potatoes are generally grown?—Generally all over Fife, Perth, and Forfarshire there is a large breadth of the best land where potatoes are largely grown, and that is going to come out to be the case this year.

Hay and corn crops.

12,138. But in other cases in respect of hay and corn crops?—Really hay is mainly grown for their own use, if they do grow it, in those counties.

12,139. It is still grown for the feed of their cattle?—Yes. The crops are good, but the prices are very small.

12,140. Crops of oats are good, I suppose?—They are good, but fetch small prices.

Low prices.

12,141. Then the depression you speak of resulted mainly in consequence of the low prices of the last few years?—Exactly.

12,142. In spite of that, I gather from your report that no farm is to be found untenanted in the district?—That is so.

12,143. And that where farms are vacant they find tenants?—Yes.

Reduction of rent.

12,144. I suppose at a reduction of rent?—Yes, at a reduction of rent.

12,145. And the reduction of rent, I think you say, has varied from 20 or 30 per cent. to 40 per cent.?—Yes.

Leases.

12,146. Are the new tenancies on lease, or from year to year?—Mostly on lease.

12,147. The result of the depression, therefore, has not been to break up that system of letting land by lease in Scotland?—No. There are a good many let on shorter leases, say on 19-year leases with a break at five years. There are a good many in that way now.

12,148. A break of five years in favour of whom?—In favour of either party, but generally speaking the land is all let on lease.

12,149. Generally on a 19-years' lease?—Yes, generally on a 19-years' lease.

12,150. Did the landlords generally reduce their rents in cases where leases were granted?—I think they did. Perhaps they were a little too long, some of them in doing it, but still I think that the depression has been pretty fairly met by the proprietors in the end.

12,151. Despite the fact that the tenants held on leases?—Exactly. If they had done so a few years sooner it might have been better for both parties.

12,152. Still in the main the landlords have done their duty?—Yes.

Judicial rents.

12,153. You have referred in your report to the fact that in Aberdeenshire you found a demand for judicial rents?—Yes, that was talked about in some measure there.

Small holdings.

12,154. Was that, do you think, due to the fact that the holdings there average smaller than in other parts of Scotland?—I think so.

12,155. They are more nearly approaching to the Highland system?—Yes, to the crofters.

12,156. What do the farms average there?—I think about 100 acres will be pretty near the average of a great many of them.

12,157. Are there a great number below 100 acres?—Yes, plenty.

12,158. And in cases of farms below 100 acres are they generally cultivated by the tenants themselves?—Yes.

12,159. And their families?—And their families.

12,160. Do they erect any of the buildings themselves?—No, the landlord has to do that.

12,161. There is no parallel between them and the Irish case of the tenants effecting the improvements?—No, I do not think so.

12,162. When the leases fall through do the same tenants generally continue, or is there generally a change in the tenancy?—I think they generally get a fair chance to remain on.

12,163. Are changes frequent on the termination of the leases?—No, I do not think they are.

12,164. I am now speaking of Aberdeenshire?—Quite so.

12,165. In other parts of Scotland what is the rule?—I do not think they change very much.

12,166. Not very much?—No.

12,167. Out of Aberdeenshire did you not find any general demand for judicial rents?—No, I never heard it spoken about except at Aberdeen.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

12,168. Then in respect to the Agricultural Holdings Act, you say at paragraph 51: "the principle of the Act "is unanimously admitted to be a sound one, but it is "equally considered that some simpler and less expen-"sive method must be adopted for ascertaining the "rights of parties." What changes in that direction were you asked to recommend?—At present a large farmer who had a big claim of 1,000*l*., say, can face the cost, which may be 100*l*. or 200*l*., in contesting his claim; but if you come to a small man with a claim of 50*l*. or perhaps under 100*l*., and if he had to go into an arbitration and employ an agent, and perhaps go to proof, the money would be all eaten up and far more. That has prevented a great many small men from making a claim.

12,169. Are many claims settled outside the Act?—There are a good many cases. Some of the proprietors in the north have schedules put to their leases providing a certain right to claim compensation, and a good many, I think, in Forfarshire—I would say principally in Forfarshire—are settled in that way without going to arbitration.

Method substituted for the Act.

12,170. What is the method adopted of settling the claim where not under the Act?—They have a schedule put to the lease allowing certain compensation for manure applied and cake consumed.

12,171. I am not speaking of that. I mean assuming that there is a certain scale of compensation laid down under private agreement, what is the method adopted of ascertaining the quantum when a change of tenancy takes place?—I can hardly give a general answer to that question. Whether they employ an arbiter or not depends on their agreement. I fancy it would be done in most cases by the factor on the property. He would work it out to see what they were entitled to get.

12,172. It is rather important to know what is the method adopted where the people proceed by arrangement in substitution for the method adopted in the Act?—Quite so.

12,173. Because, that would point to the direction in which a change could be made?—That I could hardly say, unless it is just done with the factor. There are certain things that the tenant is to get, in the terms of his agreement, and he would show the factor how his claim is made up; that is the way it would be done.

12,174. Generally speaking, I suppose as often as not, there is some dispute as to the amount?—Yes, if the tenant has not kept his vouchers properly.

12,175. The probability is, that on a change of tenancy, whatever may be the scale laid down by the agreement, there would be some dispute as to the facts?—Quite so, if the vouchers are not there.

12,176. Then arises the question, how is that dispute settled?—I do not know whether in that case it is done by arbitration; I really do not know.

12,177. If one could ascertain that, it would point to the direction in which a change could be made in the Act itself with a view of simplification?—Quite so.

12,178. As you have pointed out, the principle appears to be sound, but the method is expensive?—It is principally in Forfarshire, on a few estates where they have a schedule; in the case of Lord Dalhousie and Lord Strathmore, and one or two others up there.

12,179. (*Mr. Little.*) There is the Duke of Richmond?—I believe the Duke has a scale of that sort.

Change in system of cultivation.

12,180. (*Chairman.*) Has there been much change in the method of cultivation, in consequence of the depression?—There has been a good deal of land put down to grass all over these counties. Perhaps farmers that were keeping eight pair of horses, might reduce them to something like five, or something of that sort. That is about the general thing all over, I think.

Reduced expenditure.

12,181. Have they reduced the labour bill, in consequence?—Well, I think they have so far.

12,182. What do they produce?—They just grow more grass.

12,183. I mean is it dairy farming?—No, there is very little done in dairy farming, except in some few places near a town or near a village. They just keep more sheep and more cattle.

12,184. Then, I presume, to some extent the other matters have been adjusted to the lower prices?—They have tried to reduce the expenditure; that is one thing they have tried to do to meet it.

12,185. The expenditure is reduced somewhat?—Yes.

Rates.

12,186. Are the rates reduced in proportion to the reduction of rents?—No, I think the rates have rather been going up.

12,187. Going up in the £?—Yes; the rates have been generally going up in the £.

12,188. Has there been a reduced assessment in proportion to the reduction in the rent?—Of course, the rent coming down, would naturally put them up in the £ a little.

12,189. Do you think on the whole that the actual burthen of the rates is heavier than it was?—Yes, I think so. They complain in the north very much in regard to the poors rates, that they are not represented on the boards; they say that generally it is so many members of the Kirk Session, as they call it up in Scotland. Really there are very great complaints in Forfarshire and Fifeshire, especially, and in Perthshire too, that they are not represented on the boards. Whether that would make any difference or not, I do not know.

12,190. Then would you say that there is no lack of men of capital ready to take those farms?—You cannot say there is much.

The letting of farms.

12,191. Not much?—No.

12,192. There are men ready to come forward?—Yes; it is wonderful just now when farms are thrown into the market how people are ready to take them.

12,193. With capital?—With fair capital. Of course they are taking them at reduced rents.

12,194. I suppose they come in with some advantage as compared with past times, in consequence of the lower valuation?—Yes, there is something in that.

12,195. Somewhat less capital will do?—Quite so.

12,196. And there are men of sufficient capital ready to take these farms?—Yes, there are.

Labour.

12,197. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Is there any scarcity of agricultural labour?—I cannot say that there is very much, but in some districts near the towns it is complained of. In Forfarshire, near Dundee, they were complaining very much about the men going away into the towns. But now I think there is some reaction taking place, and they are beginning to come back again from the towns.

12,198. Has the cost of agricultural labour increased?—It has. During the last 10 or 12 years I think it has gone up something like 15 per cent.

Sale by live-weight.

12,199. May I ask your opinion as regards selling cattle, both fat and store cattle, and sheep by weight—what is thought of that by the tenant farmer?—It is generally recommended all over that cattle should be sold by weight, at so much the hundred-weight.

12,200. Is it put into execution now; is it done in the market?—It is increasing every day, I should say, at all the sales.

Cattle disease.

12,201. As regards cattle disease, is there any expression of opinion as to that?—No, except that they say that tuberculosis is a great hardship just now. I forget what the percentage is of cattle that every week are found with it. Say at a cattle sale, when butchers go to buy their cattle, if one is found to have tuberculosis it is condemned. There is a considerable percentage condemned every week in Edinburgh owing to that, and there is no doubt that is a thing that will have to be taken up very shortly.

12,202. It is condemned as dead meat?—Yes. It is condemned as unfit for use. At present the butcher has to lose that, and of course that is against the sale of cattle. The butchers know that if they have a beast that turns out to have it, it might be condemned, and they naturally try to buy their cattle all the cheaper.

12,203. How is that to be met; what is the opinion?—I do not see how it is to be met unless the Government come in and pay for those cattle, and I think that is what it is looking to.

12,204. For cattle affected with tuberculosis?—Yes. It is a very serious matter. I forget the percentage although I was told the other day.

12,205. Is that the general opinion of the farmers in Scotland?—Yes.

12,206. That there ought to be compensation for cattle slaughtered?—Yes.

Slaughter of foreign cattle.

12,207. As regards the foreign importation of cattle, have you any opinion as to whether they should be slaughtered at the ports or not?—All over those northern counties they complain very much of not getting any cattle this last year. They wish to see the ports open again for them. They want to get them alive as stores, you understand. The price of stores is raised very much, and that is how feeding is paying so very ill in Scotland this year.

12,208. They are not afraid of cattle from abroad bringing disease?—No they are not.

Potato growing.

12,209. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Has there not been an exportation of potatoes to America?—There have been a few exported, but then the duty on the export of potatoes to America is some 41*s*. a ton, and the potatoes can be bought just now in England at 30*s*. or 28*s*. Of course, you can easily see when this 41*s*. is to be paid that that is almost a preventative from them going to America at all.

12,210. So that that has not helped potato growers much?—No, it has not. It would help them very much if the Americans were to take off that duty.

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12,211. May I ask if you have had a new potato disease this year in Scotland?—Yes, we have had a new potato disease this year which is very serious. It is something like a string through the potato, and when you cut the potatoes they get quite black inside, yet the potato looks perfectly well outside.

12,212. This is quite new, is it not?—Yes, some people have it one part of the field, and in another part of the field they have not got it, but if it is there at all, it destroys the sale of the whole.

12,213. Can you say whether the potatoes have been sent to an expert to say what the disease is?—No, I cannot say that I know of that being done.

12,214. It is very important that it should be discovered?—It is a very serious matter to a great many of the potato growers. It is mostly on light sandy land, a sort of softish land; on clay land they do not have it.

Dairying; and fruit farming.

12,215. You say "dairy, fruit, and poultry farming "have made no material increase"?—That is so.

12,216. Is that because of the want of markets?—I think it is because the cost of labour to work a dairy farm is very serious nowadays.

12,217-8. Would that apply to fruit also?—There is not such a thing as a fruit farm; there is some little near Perth, but it is comparatively trifling.

12,219. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Might it not be made part of farming if people set their minds to it?—I do not think so. You can get fruit from abroad far cheaper than you can grow it. You know you can get far cheaper and better fruit from America than you can grow in your own garden.

12,220. (*Mr. Clay.*) You have had large experience of valuations?—Yes, I have done a good deal.

12,221. And sometimes under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Quite so.

Potato growing.

12,222. Your farming is mostly confined to growing potatoes and food for cattle and sheep?—Exactly.

12,223. Have your potatoes been rather a failure in price this season?—They have been a great failure this year.

12,224. In East Lothian what would you say the loss on a potato crop per ton, or per acre would be?—Well, I should think from 10*l.* to 15*l.* an acre, at least I lose 10*l.* myself this year over 330 acres. I lose more than 10*l.* an acre.

12,225. Do you grow 330 acres of potatoes?—Yes.

12,226. What is the cost of making them as a general rule?—They cost me about 20*l.* an acre.

12,227. May I ask you what rent you are paying now?—I pay on an average fully 4*l.* 10*s.* an acre.

12,228. And how much is the gross sum that you are paying now?—A little over 5,000*l.*

12,229. Have you had any experience in dairying in Midlothian?—Yes, I kept a dairy of between 70 and 80 cows for some 21 years.

12,230. The produce was mostly sold in Edinburgh itself, I believe?—Yes, the milk was sold in Edinburgh.

Reduction of rent.

12,231. You have been asked by the Chairman whether the general reduction of rent has been rising on an average to about 30 per cent.?—Yes, 30 per cent.

12,232. In the Lothians has it been anything like that sum?—In some cases it has, in some it has not.

12,233. Landlords, as a rule, have met their tenants, perhaps some a little too late, but, as a rule, in a very friendly spirit?—Yes, I think, as a rule, they have, but they were a little too late in doing it.

12,234. You say in your report that the question of the rent is the root of the whole matter, would you explain what you mean by that?—I mean by that that we are not likely ever to get Protection again to raise prices, and I cannot see how the men are to live at all, unless it comes off the rent. That is about it.

12,235. It cannot come off the labour market?—No, I would never approve of that.

12,236. If we curtail our expenditure on cakes and manure, we are letting it down?—You let down the land.

12,237. You let down the fertility of the land?—Quite so.

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12,238. I think, in your report, you say that you had two or three people talking to you about the malt tax?—Yes.

The malt tax.

12,239. What effect do you consider. or do the people you visited consider, did the change of price, owing to the abolition of this malt tax on beer, have upon first-class barley?—It is thought, generally speaking, that it has reduced the price of barley from 5*s.* to 10*s.* a quarter.

12,240. And that the general public has not been benefited by the change?—No, it has gone all into the pockets of the brewers, and of the foreign growers of barley.

12,241. Has it not enabled the brewers to make their beer from maize, and rice, and sugar, and other things?—Quite so, and some of them make 100,000*l.* a year that were only making 50,000*l.* before. That is how it turned out.

Sale by live weight.

12,242. Another important point touched upon is the selling of cattle by live weight; you know the American system?—Yes. I have been attending sales pretty often lately just to see how the thing has been working in Edinburgh, where they had the weights put up. Every bullock taken in, you saw his weight put up on the board; if two came in, you saw the weight of the two, and people knew at once what they were doing. There was a sale in East Lothian the other day which I did not get to. Messrs. Swans were beginning this sale. They had no weighbridge. I myself sent some very good cattle to the sale, and I am quite sure that if the weights had been there I would have got 30*s.* a head more for my cattle. People could not believe the weights that they were. I would certainly say that cattle should be all sold by live weight.

12,243. I suppose there is a general understanding, as a rule, that all auction marts must have a weighbridge?—Quite so.

12,244. If they are bound to have that they might as well be bound to sell cattle on the American plan, by live weight?—Exactly.

12,245. You think it would be a benefit to the farmer?—I think it would.

12,246. The farmer has no chance with the butcher, otherwise?—No.

State loans.

12,247. Would you advocate giving money to the landlords at a cheap rate for making substantial improvements?—I think so. I think it very important that cheaper money should be provided by Government. At one time, you know, there was a great deal of money granted at 6½ per cent., I think it was, and there was a great deal of land drained at that time, which was some number of years ago; but now in the last few years there is almost no draining being done at all, and there is no doubt that the land would suffer shortly very seriously from the want of new draining. I think that is the principal thing, that would help landlords and tenants both if they could get money at a cheap rate. A tenant would pay perhaps 3 per cent. for money even in these bad times to get land drained; he might pay that percentage, but at 6½ per cent. tenants will not look at it at all.

12,248. If the small holding system came in, the landlord would have to have his farms divided, and it would be very hard for the landlords to raise the money for the steadings, and roads, and other things?—Quite so; you cannot expect them to do that, they will never do that.

12,249. And this money which would be lent by the State would be not only for the benefit of themselves and the tenants, but for the benefit of the labourers performing the work?—Of course.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

12,250. Now to come to a burning question in Scotland just now, which is the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Quite so.

12,251. You have had several valuations and arrangements under that Act, and regarding what you said about private arrangements you were perfectly certain that landlords settle them with their tenants, but they were not many until the landlords and tenants saw the new process, were they?—Exactly.

12,252. Do you not know that the rate per ton for cakes and the value per unit for manures is laid down in the lease?—Exactly.

12,253. Therefore when the incoming tenant comes to be the outgoing tenant, it is a very simple thing for the factor, or the landlord, to settle the compensation; it is a mere rule of three question?—Exactly.

12,254. I think those things are then settled quietly, and without ado, and without the expense of going to law?—Yes.

12,255. Regarding the Act itself, you say, I think, in your report, that it has failed to accomplish the object it was intended to serve?—Quite so.

12,256. Has not the procedure been cumbrous, and the working of that Act very expensive?—Quite so.

12,257. Where is the principal expense?—The tenant makes a claim and the landlord has the tenant's claim, according to the law just now, a long time before he has to make up his, and, of course, the landlord or his factor tries to swamp the tenant's claim, and it is just a fight between the two.

12,258. And then if you go to law it is a fight between whom?—The lawyers; the lawyers get the best of it, I think.

12,259. And so, therefore, it deters many a medium tenant farmer making his claim?—A man with a small claim cannot face it at all. You or I, perhaps, if we had a claim of 1,000*l.* or 1,500*l.*, would have to face it, but a man with a claim of 100*l.* cannot face it at all.

12,260. I suppose the tenant is often deterred from making his claim for fear of a counter claim?—Exactly.

12,261. And of thereby risking a law suit?—Yes.

12,262. Regarding the claim and counter claim, would it not be better to have the same parties, the landlord and the tenant making their claims together, say, two months after the tenancy?—Quite so; it should be made at the same time, and one should not see the other's claim. They should be both lodged at once.

12,263. Just now the landlord for his deteriorations on the farm has the course of law before him?—Quite so.

12,264. So that it does not require him to go to the Agricultural Holdings Act even just now to get his claim. It has been stated here that the claim for deterioration of the land has prevented people from making the claim, but the landlord has a claim just now, has he not, through the course of Common Law in Scotland?—Quite so. He often does not come on very well, I think, though.

12,265. In your report I think you say you would abolish the schedules?—I would most certainly.

12,266. What would you put in their place?—I would just go to the sheriff and get him to appoint an arbiter.

12,267. And he would be always willing to give the tenant the enhanced letting value of that farm that he has made for the landlord?—Exactly.

12,268. The landlord and the outgoing tenant are the only parties to the contract?—Exactly.

12,269. You think the incoming tenant has nothing to do with it?—No.

12,270. How?—Of course it is a great advantage to him to get a farm in good order. No doubt if you or I were looking out for a farm we would want to get one in good order, but we would have to pay for it on that account.

12,271. So that the incoming tenant takes a farm and bids a rent for it, according to the condition and fertility of the soil?—Yes; that the late tenant has left it in.

12,272. Left in and made through his acts of fertility, through the manures and cakes put upon the land?—Quite so, and if he left it in bad order the landlord would get less for his farm.

12,273. So that the outgoing tenant and the landlord are the only two parties to that contract?—Quite so.

12,274. And they should settle; and as an act of justice the landlord has no right to throw his obligation over to the incoming tenant?—Quite so.

12,275. What other amendments would you suggest?—You mean in the Holdings Act.

12,276. In the Agricultural Holdings Act something should be allowed, do you think, for what you might call increased fertility?—Yes, most certainly.

12,277. The Act never yet has faced that question?—No, but there have been two or three cases in Scotland settled where that has been given effect to; two cases, I think, one that I had to do with myself where it was settled outside of the Act, and there was no appeal made. However, there might have been.

12,278. But has the Act sufficient power to let you go back to that increased fertility?—At present, you mean?

12,279. Yes?—No, it has not the power; but there are two cases I know of where it was settled and where they did not appeal.

12,280. Is it not of very vital importance in the present time when land to all appearance is laid down to grass because it will not pay in wheat or cereals that the Act should comprehend such a proceeding?—Quite so, no doubt.

12,281. You think it would be a great advantage?—A great advantage.

12,282. Of course we all agree that at the same time the landlord should be protected against bad cultivation?—Most certainly. I think he is not protected enough, that is my idea.

12,283. If the compensation through that Act was sufficient there would be less bad cultivation?—I think there would. I think it would tend to less bad cultivation.

Official referees.

12,284. To save expense we have had it before us here that we have the machinery in Scotland to work it uncommonly well; instead of having arbiters all round, and lawyers all round, if we had these cases left to an official referee—official referees being appointed in each county ——?—In the hands of the sheriff.

12,285. Appointed by the sheriff?—Yes.

12,286. Of course there is no such person in England?—I would not approve of the sheriff's substitute. I say the sheriff.

12,287. The head sheriff of the county?—The head sheriff of the county or counties, whoever he may be.

12,288. That official referee would be a responsible man, and when he had the claims of the tenant and the dilapidations of the landlord laid before him, they would bring what evidence they liked, and thereby he would settle without appeal?—Quite so.

12,289. Without appeal? Would you allow the Court of Appeal to come in after?—No, I would allow no appeal after that.

The scheduling of farms.

12,290. It has been raised here too, and I think it is a matter of considerable importance, that when an incoming tenant enters a farm the general condition of the farm should always be scheduled in the same way as cropping is scheduled?—Quite so; it should always be reported upon when he goes into the farm.

12,291. And so on leaving that farm it would be on evidence and a factor to enable the next man who gets possession to see how he got it?—How he got it and how he is leaving it.

12,292. Do you consider that very important?—Yes.

12,293. If it were scheduled, and if the farm were left in bad condition, and the incoming tenant took it that incoming tenant when he became the outgoing tenant, if he left that farm in good condition, would have the more credit?—Exactly.

12,294. And they would have it in black and white to show what condition he got it in, and *vice versâ;* if he got it in good condition and left it in a bad condition the incoming tenant, then being the outgoing tenant, should answer for his dilapidations?—Quite so.

12,295. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Assume that there is a farm to let, and that it is to be scheduled, I understand you would have it fixed at par, or below par, or above par, by a certain valuer, or a man who is supposed to understand the quality of the land. Then it would be let to the incoming tenant, and the incoming tenant, say in 20 years, would leave it, the man who scheduled it for him, of course, might be dead, or anything else might happen to him, and another man is called in who may have a very different view when he takes into consideration the quality of the land, how would you get a uniform standard?—If you had it all down in black and white how he got the farm they would just have to report on it at the end of the lease. As you say, some men might

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take different opinions. You or I might go over a farm, and we might have a good bit of difference, you know, but still I cannot see how you are to prevent that unless you have the one opinion to set against the other.

12,296. You know in some parts of the country that you find the farms really and naturally dirty; I mean to say you cannot clean them?—I do not believe that.

12,297. In Herefordshire, for instance, I was very much surprised to see it?—I think if land is not cleaned it is a bad farmer that has it. He should not have it at all if he has not cleaned it.

12,298. A man going from a neighbourhood where farms are well cleaned, and so forth, to a district where farms are not, and where they have never been cleaned?—I think if we had some such rule as I have just suggested we should not have so many dirty farms. I am sure we should not.

12,299. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Are you giving the opinion of the farmers with whom you have come in contact?—Yes, I think I am.

12,300. (*Mr. Clay.*) But do you believe that that schedule, that that document, would be a good index as to how he got that farm?—It is the only thing you can have, I think.

12,301. Of course, in all cases men will differ?—Yes.

12,302. You can only get as near the point as possible?—You cannot get nearer than that

Security for compensation.

12,303. There is one other thing I will put to you; without an extended Agricultural Holdings Act to give security you will not get men now to put money into the land?—No, you will not.

12,304. They will not risk their money without they see some chance of——?—Getting security.

12,305. Getting the balance that remains unexhausted?—Exactly.

Rent.

12,306. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) On page 8, in reference to what you call the solution of the difficulty of low prices, namely, a reasonable adjustment of rent, you go on to state the basis upon which all rents ought to be calculated: that you say is "after making due "allowance for working expenses, interest on capital "invested, and a fair return for the skill and labour "of the farmer." I would like to know how these different points are to be arrived at?—Do you mean when a man goes to take a farm?

12,307. I mean if the question of rent is to be settled, after taking all these things into account, the first thing you have got to do, I suppose, would be to come to some sound way of arriving at a wise decision as to what those ought to be; and how would you come to that?—If a man goes and looks at a farm he judges of the land, to begin with, and he makes up his mind as to what crops it would grow, and he frames his offer very much on that.

12,308. But you have nothing new or novel to put before us in any way that would lead to a way of fixing this reasonable and fair rent?—No, that is the difficulty of it. Look at the difference of offers that go for farms sometimes—they are often very wide.

12,309. None of those whom you interviewed say that there should be no change, then, in the agreement between the landlord and the tenant as to what is a fair and a reasonable rent. I refer to what you say in paragraph 10, on page 8?—"The question of rent "lies at the root of the whole matter, and is the main "factor which ultimately determines the margin of "profit; and so long as the letting of land continues "to be dealt with on the footing of an ordinary "commercial transaction, the natural laws of supply "and demand will ultimately bring the question of "rent to its natural and proper level."

12,310. What I meant to try to get out was this: You state here that rent should only be a residuum after certain factors have been taken into account, and I want to know what rule you yourself lay down to settle these factors?—I think it is very difficult to lay down a rule.

Land Courts.

12,311. You go on to say that you do not consider, at least I take it that this is the opinion of those whom you met, that legislative aid should be called in to help the farmer—that was the general opinion?—Quite so.

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12,312. Therefore, that matter still remains as it was?—It was only in Aberdeen where they went in for legislative aid.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

12,313. In regard to that question which the Chairman asked you as to how the matter was settled as to compensation when the tenant and the landlord agreed in the lease upon certain percentages of manures and feeding-stuffs during certain years of their lease, is it not in a very simple way settled by there being a clause that the vouchers must be produced to the agent or the landlord, and upon that, without further parley, the matter is settled?—I believe that is so.

12,314. Then I wanted to ask you what is the object of putting off the time of lodging the claim for two months after the expiry of the tenancy?—A farmer might not know just exactly until he saw the very end, perhaps two months might be long enough.

12,315. You think that that would be a convenient period?—I think it would.

12,316. And that they should be lodged simultaneouly?—They should be lodged both at one time.

The marking of foreign meat.

12,317. With regard to a matter which I suppose you admit—in fact you do—is a matter of importance up there, the marking in some way of foreign meat. I notice that the result of these gentlemen's opinions came to be, that the best way to carry out the matter was by licensing the place where the meat was sold?—Yes.

12,318. Did they consider that the consumer's interests would be protected sufficiently by doing so in establishments where both kinds of meat were sold?—Quite so.

12,319. Did the question come up of how soon meat was to be termed home-grown meat, or was to cease to be foreign meat, in the event of the restrictions being taken off, you understand, and cattle being bought and perhaps finished off in a month's time or six week's time; was that taken into account in any of the proposals that were made to you?—No, I think these cattle would be held as Scotch beef, and would be Scotch fed.

12,320. Anything that went away from the port on its legs?—Exactly.

Conditions in leases. Manuring.

12,321. At page 12 you speak of cleaning and manuring the farm properly; is there any difference between that and the present clause that is in leases "in accordance with the rules of good husbandry"?—They have one and the same meaning. At the same time I think that "the rules of good husbandry" is a general clause which is very much departed from; it has got to be a mere lawyers' phrase, I think.

12,322. Would not the same construction come to be placed upon the obligation to clean and manure the farm properly?—I think there is more in that than in the other. "The rules of good husbandry" has fallen very much into disuse.

Rotation at end of leases.

12,323. Then I see in the report there is a good deal of weight put upon leaving the farm in a specified rotation at the termination of the lease?—Yes. I think it is generally allowed that whatever freedom of cropping there is, there should be a course of cropping left for the last four or five years, or something like that.

12,324. In the present position when, as a rule, tenants are not very willing to take a 19 years' lease without a break, and these breaks of five years being the usual thing, that means really laying down a specified rotation for the whole of that lease?—Well, it does so far, there is no doubt.

12,325. Then there would be very little change from the present position?—I think there would not be much change where that would be.

Freedom of sale.

12,326. Has it been proved to your satisfaction that where freedom of sale exists the farmers are in a better way?—I think they are. For instance, this year in some parts of Scotland straw is very dear, a very great many men are selling their straw this year and selling their hay too. I think those men will be doing themselves good, and I think if they are getting money into their own pockets that is all in favour of the landlord.

12,327. Have you found in these districts which you visited that those small proprietors or tenants who really had a free hand to do as they liked, are in any better condition and keeping the land also in better order than those who are tied down under the rotation?—I think they will keep it in quite as good, I will say better order. You may tie down a bad farmer to any rotation you like, but he will leave his land in bad order in spite of you, do what you like.

Entailed estates.

12,328. I see a strong opinion expressed here against the law of entail?—It is that it is standing in the way of improvements in a good many cases.

12,329. In those districts that you visited?—Yes, many of the landlords have not a free hand to deal with the property as they would like to do owing to the entail.

12,330. Did you make any rough estimate of the amount of land that is under this law of entail in these different districts?—No, I did not, because it comes largely over Scotland.

Compensation for home-grown produce.

12,331. Then in regard to a question which I see is spoken of a good deal, that of compensation for home-grown stuff consumed on the farm?—I think that is only fair.

12,332. How could you carry it out practically?—Many a man just now is consuming all his wheat on the farm; surely you would pay him for that.

12,333. Yes, but are you to take the man's word for it?—According to the thing just now he could sell his own wheat and he could buy his next neighbour's.

12,334. (*Viscount Cobham.*) What vouchers could he produce?—If he could not produce vouchers you could know how many acres of wheat he had, and it would not be very difficult to make up an estimate how much those acres of wheat turned out.

12,335. (*Mr. Clay.*) Would he not have the evidence from the steward, and the other people?—Exactly. I do not think it would be difficult to do it at all.

12,336. Would it not be a safe thing for the landlord?—I would not allow them for oats, for instance, that were required to feed the working horses. I certainly would not allow that. But many a man just now is feeding all his potatoes; if it were the last year of his lease it would be a very great hardship that he had to consume all those potatoes, and not get anything for them.

12,337. Would it not meet Mr. Gilmour's question if when he used perhaps 100 quarters of wheat he gave a statement to the landlord, or the land agent or factor, that he was going to consume 100 quarters of wheat, or 20 tons of potatoes, and if that were kept as a document?—Yes. I do not think it would be difficult to work that part of it. That is a thing they are all very strong upon. Go where you like that is the first sore that they raise in connection with the Agricultural Holdings Act.

12,338. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) I am quite aware of that, and that is an expression I wanted to get out. But you cannot expect that the landlord is going to take the word of every tenant with regard to the matter?—No, certainly not; I know some men might try it on, no doubt.

Abolition of the law of hypothec.

12,339. Then there is one other question in regard to the abolition of the law of hypothec; what effect has that had now in Scotland?—Since you have spoken about that I may say that the only place where the law of hypothec was raised was Aberdeen, and it was raised there by a Member of Parliament. I was really very much astonished at its being raised. If there is a thing that I have a very strong opinion upon myself it is with regard to that law of hypothec. I was one of those men who thought when they abolished the law of hypothec that we, the tenantry of Scotland were entitled to a re-valuation of the land, on the ground that the law of hypothec had artificially increased the rent of the land. If we had got that re-valuation of the land, then there would have been many of our best farmers who have gone to the wall—dead and buried, killed with the bad times—there would have been many of those men farming to-day, and our landlords in Scotland would have been getting more rent to-day for their land than they are getting, and would have got it all along. I think that is the first thing that hurt the tenantry of Scotland when they did away with the law of hypothec. The landlords began on the back of that, and fore-rented the land. Previously the land was taken, and perhaps the tenants got a year and a half's credit, and they might have two years credit. Very well, they did away with that, and I know many an estate where there were good men farming at that time, who got a new lease just on the back of the abolition of the law, and they had to come down with the two rents, and the landlord simply took away the money of these men, the capital that they had to work their farms with. That crippled a great many farmers financially.

12,340. Do you consider now that the majority of the rents lately given in Scotland are forehanded?—Well, these forehanded rents are greatly done away with.

12,341. I mean on those back-rented farms?—They are almost all shoved forward as the leases have come out.

12,342. (*Mr. Clay.*) Did the law of hypothec not create that extreme back renting and false value, and raise the price of land?—It created a false value for the farms, because a man that should have taken 3,000*l.* on a farm could easily go in with 2,000*l.*; and it brought Tom, Dick, and Harry, everybody, into the market for these farms, and raised the rent to beyond what it had a right ever to be.

12,343. It did not give the trader or the merchant a fair chance when he was risking his capital while the landlord was only risking the interest on his money?—Exactly, and these men that traded with the tenant very often lost their money and failed, but of course the landlord got his 20*s.* in the £.

Corn crops.

12,344. (*Mr. Little.*) You have given us some statistics as to the farming in the counties that you have inspected; it appears that barley has decreased in area very much more than wheat?—Yes.

12,345. Wheat, I find, has decreased in 10 years only about 5 per cent. and barley 18?—Exactly.

12,346. Is that because wheat is only grown upon land specially suitable for it, or where the straw is specially valuable?—Exactly, you will see in those counties very little wheat has been grown all along, and they have changed it very little, very likely kept it on for the sake of the straw.

12,347. It is grown on the very best wheat-growing land?—On the very best.

Cattle and sheep.

12,348. There has been a very large increase in the number of cattle and sheep?—Yes, there has been more land put down to grass.

12,349. Twenty-five per cent. increase in the sheep, and 16 per cent. in the cattle I make it?—Quite so.

12,350. That indicates a change from corn growing and root growing to pastoral farming?—Quite so.

12,351. That has diminished the labour?—It has diminished the labour bill so far.

12,352. Has it been brought about by the dearness of labour to some extent, or by the low prices of corn?—I think the dearness of labour has had a little to do with it, and another thing that has caused it a good deal, especially in Aberdeenshire, I would say perhaps in all the counties, is that we are a good deal bothered with "finger and toe." The great thing has been to give the turnips a little wider space, from four years to six years, or something like that.

Cost of labour.

12,353. With regard to the cost of labour you say in paragraph 14, "during the period embraced in this report," do you mean to say since the period that you were acting as an Assistant Commissioner?—Since the Duke of Richmond's Commission—going back to that.

12,354. Are you of opinion that there has been a considerable increase in the cost of labour?—I think about 15 per cent.

Wages.

12,355. Is that in the wages of the labourers?—Yes, in the wages.

12,356. Is that borne out by a comparison with the present wages?—Yes, I think so, our wages are very much bigger in Scotland than you have them in the South here.

12,357. But payment in kind still exists?—In a small way.

12,358. In Aberdeen and in Fife?—Yes, but it is coming down very much.

12,359. But still a considerable portion of the wages are paid in kind in Aberdeen and Fifeshire?—Well there is a portion but nothing to what it used to be.

12,360. So far as the wages have been paid in kind they cannot have been increased?—No, they would have been down.

12,361. But the value of the payment in kind has decreased?—At the same time if they were paid in milk and paid in meal there has not been much difference in the meal and the milk, and so if they were paid in potatoes there has not been much difference there.

12,362. In Aberdeen and Fife?—I would hardly take it that in that part it has gone down much. You see cats have not come down.

12,363. The difference to the labourer would not be great so long as he had to consume those products?—No, of course not.

12,364. And the difference to the farmer would not be great in so far as he pays in kind?—Quite so.

12,365. He is so far unaffected by the change in price, but the money wages which are only a part of the men's earnings have largely increased?—Yes, they have.

12,366. Is it the wages you mean that have increased 15 per cent. or the earnings?—The money wage, putting it altogether.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

12,367. I just wanted to make that point clear, because I arrived at a rather different conclusion from a comparison of the Reports of 1879 with the recent Reports. Now with regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act, I should like to ask you is it a necessary consequence of that Act that there should be such a great expense?—Great expense?

12,368. Yes, in an arbitration under the Act?—That is the fault of it just now, that it can only be worked at a great expense, and anything that I have been asked to propose is in the way of simplifying the Act.

12,369. Why should it cost more than an ordinary arbitration which is taking place every day in England between the outgoing and the incoming tenant?—On account of the expert witnesses and legal agents who are employed in a contested reference under the Act, but who are not required in an ordinary valuation between an outgoing and incoming tenant. In Scotland there have been two or three important cases contested; the tenant had an arbiter, the landlord had an arbiter, and then they had an oversman; they each had a clerk, and then they went to a proof, and there were perhaps 8 or 10 or 20 men on each side called in as witnesses. You have no idea where it went to. I have sat myself three or four days at a time. It is to prevent all that do you not see?

12,370. You say that the incoming tenant has nothing whatever to do with it, and that the landlord should pay, and he would be recouped by letting the farm at an increased rental?—Quite so.

12,371. As regards manures which are very easily exhausted, are they not?—Some of them very.

12,372. The landlord pays down a capital sum, the tenant gets possession, and in the course of three or four years he could exhaust those improvements?—Yes, quite easily.

12,373. The capital would be gone, but would he pay an equivalent rent which would compensate the landlord for the amount of capital?—It is thought that he would. It does not always give an increased rent when the farm is let again, it might be all the lower.

12,374. You think that the landlord should pay down a capital sum for a thing which is put into the tenants hands, and which he may consume and carry away?—Quite so. You cannot prevent that unless you come on him for——

12,375. I do not understand that you would impose freedom of cultivation by law. You would not insist upon agreements giving freedom of cultivation and of sale?—No.

12,376. You would leave it a matter of bargain?—Yes, I think so.

12,377. But you think that land agents, particularly lawyer agents, might learn a little wisdom about these restrictive covenants?—Quite so.

12,378. Would you say that a landlord would be quite protected if he could ensure that a tenant would leave his farm with good crops and clean?—I think so.

12,379. Good crops would imply condition?—Yes.

12,380. Cleanliness would secure that there was land in such a condition that the incoming tenant could crop it?—Yes.

Income tax.

12,381. You report that the farmers are dissatisfied at having to pay income tax upon one third of their rent?—Yes.

12,382. You know perhaps that an English farmer has to pay upon seven-sixteenths of his rent?—I believe that is so.

12,383. If the Scotchman is unfairly rated, you would think the Englishman still more so?—They get their farms at a cheaper rent.

House tax.

12,384. Then you think the house tax is not a proper tax for a farmer to pay for a farmhouse?—No, I think not.

12,385. The farmhouse is an essential part of his business premises, and he ought to be exempt from the house tax?—Quite so.

Rates.

12,386. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What is the average rate in the pound in your rural districts?—They alter very much in every county.

12,387. To what extent do they vary?—In some counties I believe 6*d.* will be about the lowest, and in some cases it will be 1*s.* or something like that.

12,388. In the northern counties of England, the rural rates are, speaking generally, lower than in the southern?—Lower in the northern.

12,389. They are lower in the northern than in the southern counties of England, certainly; do you get them lower still when you get up to Scotland; or are they higher, do you think?—I do not know what they are in England at all.

12,390. I think they would come to about 1*s.* 6*d.* in the counties in the north?—All our rates since we got the county council are, I know, increased very much. In the case of the road rate in East Lothian, Lord Wemyss told me the other day it has increased about 100 per cent. in something like the last 13 years—it is something enormous. The poor's rates in the same way. There are many parishes in Scotland where the poor's rates were kept up by putting a few shillings into the plate on a Sunday. Then they got on, and the tenants were asked to contribute 5*l.* On some of these farms, where they got off with a mere nominal sum, they are now paying 25*l.* That shows how the poor's rates have got up.

12,391. Do you know what the whole of the rural rates are in your parishes; do they come to 2*s.*?—I do not know. In the parish that I am in myself, I pay about 7*d.* for the road rate, and I think the poor's rates are about the same, 7*d.*

12,392. That comes to 14*d.*?—Yes. Then there are other small things coming up.

12,393. That would be a low rate in England?—Yes; that is not a big rate with us, but you know it is very much higher in some parts.

12,394. Do you take the rates into account when you fix the rent of a farm?—Generally speaking, they are taken into account; but my experience since I began farming is, that I have known very heavy rates put on a tenant in the middle of a lease. Once for the school rate, for instance, I had 29*l.* a year to pay, which was just put on me during a lease.

12,395. That is halved between the owner and occupier, is it not?—Yes; but we just had to pay it.

12,396. Do you find that a good rule?—The landlords at that time were largely relieved when the school rate came on.

12,397. You do halve all your rates between the landlords and tenants, do you not?—Generally speaking.

12,398. There are none that fall wholly on the tenant?—No, I do not think so.

12,399. Some fall only on the owners in Scotland, I think?—Yes, some do.

12,400. But none only on the occupiers?—No, I think not.

12,401. Do you think it would be much relief to the tenant if the rates were taken off, and put upon the owner?—I think it would give much relief to the land altogether if the poor's rates were altered. I do not see why the land should have to pay so much towards the poor's rates, seeing that it is the principal industry in the country, and an industry that does not make paupers, yet we have to keep our own paupers, and we have to keep the paupers largely from all trades. I do not think that is fair at all.

12,402. In the towns the houses are rated too, I suppose, are they not?—Yes, they are rated too.

12,403. You have the same system of rating there that we have in England, have you not?—Quite so, but look at a landlord of a property getting, say, 1,000*l.* a year; see what he has to pay for poor's rates—he may have a neighbour living just within a door or two from him, spending 20,000*l.* a year, living in a house and paying nothing almost, paying on the rating of that house, it might be at 200*l.* a year.

12,404. I see that you raise that point very strongly in your report?—Yes.

12,405. But how would you remedy it?—It should be put on means and substance.

12,406. You cannot have a local income tax?—I am talking of the poor's rates principally; but I do think that it is very hard that the tenantry should have to pay on a third of their income in regard to income tax.

12,407. How would you raise the money for the relief of the poor? How would you bring the means and substance to account?—I think you would just have to put a little more on those people.

12,408. In what way, by an income tax?—You would have to shift the burden, and put the saddle on the right horse, it is not on the right horse just now.

12,409. But would you raise it by way of an income tax?—No, I would raise it just by changing the system of laying on the poor's rates. In some parishes in Scotland it is done just now; and the land pays at reduced rates.

12,410. That is dying out, is it not?—I do not know whether it is dying out, but there are only a few of them; where they have land near a burgh say, in some cases they pay at a reduced rate, but that is not usual.

12,411. What you do there is to charge fully on the houses and the buildings, and on the land at a reduced estimate?—Yes, exactly.

12,412. That is what you mean to recommend?—Yes, that is what I would like to see.

12,413. As the sanitary rate in England is, you would have it done in that way?—Exactly.

12,414. You do not mean that you would have it levied by a central authority or anything of that kind?—No.

12,415. You would simply rate agricultural land at a lower assessment?—Quite so, and I think it is only fair.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

12,416. (*Mr. Channing.*) You said in answer to Mr. Gilmour that you were only pressed in Aberdeen for legislative aid to be given to the farmers, but I understand from your report that there is a general demand in Scotland for an amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act, is there not?—Yes, all over.

12,417. A very general demand?—Yes, all over.

12,418. Just one word about the Aberdeen case; do you think that many farmers in Aberdeenshire would make use of provisions like those of Lord Ashbourne's Land Purchase Act if they were introduced?—I believe some of those small farmers would.

12,419. And they would be willing also to undertake improvements themselves?—I think they would.

12,420. Upon the question of the Agricultural Holdings Act, you had an Act passed for Scotland a few years ago?—We had.

Official referees.

12,421. To introduce the principle of a single referee. I do not know whether you state in your report how far that has been a success or not; what is your opinion as to its working?—My opinion is in favour of a single referee. At the present time, of course, if both parties agree upon a single referee they could have one; but I would like to make it the law that there was only to be one.

12,422. The present Act does not provide for making it compulsory?—No, it does not do that.

12,423. Practically the old system is going on, do I understand?—Yes, if cases arise it goes on, they appoint arbiters.

12,424. They do not have recourse to a single referee in practice?—Well, if both parties agree of course there is nothing to prevent them, but I do not think they do agree as a rule as to one single referee.

12,425. Is it your opinion that the use of a single referee would be cheaper?—I think so, it will cheapen it very much, because it would prevent a proof, and if you go to a proof it is a very expensive matter.

12,426. Then I understand your summary of recommendations for the amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act to be pretty much this: that you would give the tenant freedom to make improvements which increase the agricultural letting value?—Quite so.

12,427. Subject to a reference being held as to their being of value for the purpose for which the holding was let?—Quite so.

The scheduling of farms.

12,428. And that you would have the condition of the land scheduled on entry and a general compensation for improvements?—Quite so.

12,429. For increased fertility and all the rest of it at the end?—Quite so.

12,430. And for deterioration on the other side?—Certainly.

12,431. You are in favour of a very simple Act therefore?—Yes, of a simple Act for that.

12,432. You were asked some questions as to the necessity of vouchers. Cannot an agricultural expert, such as you would wish to have for an official referee, judge of the general improvement of the land independently of the vouchers, although vouchers would help him?—If he applies so much manure and uses so much cake, and all those things, I do not see how you could get at it without vouchers.

12,433. The vouchers would be necessary?—Yes, they would.

12,434. But you are in favour, I understand, of compensating for continuous high cultivation?—Quite so.

12,435. That is, you would not limit the tenant merely to his outlay on manures and cakes for the last year or two?—Certainly not.

The Corshope case.

12,436. You have a case in Scotland, I think, which proves that the landlord receives value for giving compensation of that kind, that is the Corshope case?—Quite so.

12,437. It is the fact, is it not, that that farm where continuous high cultivation had been carried on for a number of years was re-let at a higher rent than farms in the neighbourhood?—Quite so, and it would not have brought the rent.

12,438. Without that continuous high cultivation?—Not without it.

12,439. Is it also the fact that after a five years' lease to the new tenant, the new tenant has taken it again at the same rent?—I believe he has.

12,440. That shows, I understand, that the fertility was not exhausted in the first five years?—Quite so.

12,441-2. (*Viscount Cobham.*) When did the old tenant go out?—It is about five years ago that that tenant went out, and there was a very serious claim raised, I believe it is the fact that they have taken it on again after being five years on the farm.

12,443. (*Mr. Clay.*) What was the increase of rent in Corshope?—I think it was a diminution of rent. I think the rent was down, and that is the strange thing.

12,444. (*Mr. Channing.*) The rent fell?—But then it would have fallen far more.

12,445. Was it not estimated that if the rent had fallen in the same proportion as the rents of adjoining farms the farm would have been re-let for somewhere about 200*l.* or 300*l.* less than it was re-let, and it was re-let for only a little less than the old rent of 700*l.*?—I believe that is so, but still the farm was not improved all the money that had to be paid; it was not all paid for increased letting value, at any rate.

12,446. (*Mr. Clay.*) If that money had not been laid out, it would have gone down so much more?—Yes, 200*l.* or 300*l.* down.

12,447. (*Mr. Channing.*) In the Corshope case this increased fertility was due to a very heavy use of cotton and linseed cake over a great number of years, was it not?—Quite so, a long consumption of cake on grass land, land that grew nothing before; in fact, it was growing heather, and it got from that to feed bullocks. I believe at the rate of more than a bullock an acre.

12,448. And it was contested whether this fertility was as great and as durable as stated?—Quite so.

12,449. But the fact of its re-letting for the second term is a presumption that it was so?—Exactly.

Freedom of sale and cropping.

12,450. Now I want to ask you one question on paragraphs 25 and 26, dealing with freedom of sale and of cropping; are we to take those as representing the general state of affairs in the counties you have examined?—Quite so.

12,451. That there is not a practical freedom of sale and of cropping in Scotland at present?—As a rule there is not. They are awfully tied up in many leases by these Edinburgh lawyers that put in conditions which they do not understand themselves, but still they keep them there.

12,452. Do you think these penal rents are really a hardship to the farmers, that they are actually being used as a hardship, or do they merely exist on paper?—I do not think they get them very often.

The marking of foreign meat.

12,453. Now about the question of the marking of meat; you say that the license to the dealer is the only way of dealing with it; have you considered the Danish way of marking the actual parts of the carcase?—I think there would be a good deal of difficulty and expense in that. I think licensing would be the best.

12,454. It would be impracticable to carry out a system like that without public slaughter houses, would it not?—I think it would. I think there would be nothing like the license; they should be bound to take a license out if they want to sell it.

12,455. If you have public slaughter-houses and inspectors, as they have in Denmark, could you not have marking on every part?—It is not so easy to follow every leg of beef. I would say the license would be far the cheapest and most economical way.

Cattle disease.

12,456. Now about the proportion of tuberculosis, you did not give the percentage?—No.

12,457. I see it is 25 per cent. in the case of cows slaughtered in London on account of pleuro-pneumonia, and 20 per cent. in your own county, Midlothian?—With cows?

12,458. Yes?—But it was with bullocks I was referring to more; I think it is 6 per cent., but I would not be sure. I know that is right with the cows, but it is a serious matter with bullocks.

12,459. Do you mean in the case of slaughtering under the Acts for pleuro-pneumonia?—Yes, exactly.

12,460. Have you formed any opinion, or has any practical man in Scotland formed an approximate opinion of the proportion in cattle generally of tuberculous cattle; have you formed any opinion yourself in dairy farming?—No, but I believe it is about what you say, 20 per cent. in Edinburgh.

12,461. That is in the case where they are slaughtered for pleuro-pneumonia, but do you think it is like that with cattle generally?—I thought you meant tuberculosis.

12,462. Do you think the percentage of tuberculosis would correspond in cattle generally to the proportion found in cattle slaughtered for pleuro-pneumonia?—I think it would, at the present time it is greater, because there is no pleuro-pneumonia at all just now.

Reduction of rent.

12,463. About the reductions of rent: you have not specified what they are in different counties, in Forfarshire, for instance; in the better parts of Forfarshire would the rents be reduced very much?—About 30 per cent.

The marking of foreign meat.

12,464. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) A question or two about the meat. You have said that the Scotch farmers are in favour of marking imported meat, and I suppose the meat of foreign cattle slaughtered at Birkenhead, or any other port of arrival?—Quite so.

12,465. Are we to understand from what you said in answer to Mr. Gilmour that these cattle imported by Scotch farmers and slaughtered by them, and sent to the London market may be labelled "prime Scotch"?—There is something in that; generally speaking, these Canadians when they are bought will be fed on an average something like 10 or 12 weeks, and I do not think it is very fair that they should be allowed to label them as the best Scotch.

12,466. But that is done now by the Scotch farmers themselves?—Well, I do not know if it is. I think there would be very few of those cattle coming to London. Those Canadian cattle that are fed in Scotland will be all slaughtered in Scotland I think; I do not think they come to London at all. Take Aberdeen cattle, for instance, they are of a different breed of cattle altogether from fed Canadians. But there is no doubt, as you say, that the thing might be done, I grant you, but it would be a very different thing to bring cattle fed 10 or 12 weeks in Scotland from bringing cattle into this country dead.

12,467. I do not mean cattle brought dead, but cattle slaughtered at Birkenhead, for instance?—Exactly, I see what you mean.

12,468. I know butchers will guarantee meat killed at Birkenhead to be pure English?—I do not know if you could find so much fault with cattle slaughtered at Birkenhead, it would be rather cattle coming in as dead meat that I should go for mostly.

12,469. One can easily tell that?—Yes.

12,470. I mean to say there is no difficulty, you need not mark foreign meat which is sent over here?—I think it is the principal thing to prevent dead meat being sold as the best Scotch or English. The other thing there is no doubt there is a difficulty about.

Compensation for home consumption.

12,471. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do you think that compensation ought to be given to a man for feeding his stock with potatoes?—You mean consuming them on the farm.

12,472. Yes?—I do.

12,473. You would not extend that to turnips, I presume?—No.

12,474. I do not quite see the difference, perhaps you will explain the difference in principle?—The potatoes are things that are grown to take to market, and in the last year of a lease if a man eats all his potatoes on a farm it must go to improve the farm very much, and I think it would be a hard thing if he was not to be paid for those potatoes the same as he would be paid for his oats.

12,475. He really would be paid because the market for potatoes has fallen, would not that be so? I see no reason why he should be paid for potatoes and not for turnips?—It is a small price he would get for passing them through the cattle.

12,476. (*Mr. Clay.*) I suppose it would not be more than 20*s*. per ton?—That is about it.

12,477. So the compensation would be very small?—Very small.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till Thursday next at 12 o'clock.

Twenty-second Day.

Thursday, 15th March 1894.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
Captain OWEN-THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary*.
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq. } *Assistant*
FREEMAN THOMAS, Esq. } *Secretaries*.

MR. THOMAS WORTHINGTON called and examined.

12,478. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You are a tenant farmer, are you not?—I am.

12,479. Where do you reside?—Near Wigan, in the Wigan Union.

12,480. How much land do you rent?—95 acres.

12,481. Are you acquainted with the rest of the Wigan Union?—With the whole of the Wigan Union.

12,482. Roughly, what is the extent, in acres, of that Union?—About 48,000 acres.

12,483. Have you resided there for some time?—All my life.

12,484. Are you a guardian?—No, I am a Justice of the Peace for the borough of Wigan.

12,485. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do you represent the Wigan Tenant Farmers' Association?—I do, I am the secretary.

12,486. How many members are there?—133.

12,487. Are they all tenant farmers in the district of Wigan?—Exclusively tenant farmers in the Wigan Union.

12,488. Do you consider that the drop in prices of agricultural produce has been the main factor in the present depression?—I do. Shall I give you the price, at the present time?

Produce and prices in the Wigan district.

12,489. Do you mean the prices of the produce raised in your district chiefly?—Yes. I may say that Wigan is a large centre; it is a large market, and practically the produce raised in the Wigan Union is consumed in the Wigan Union. It has a large population. The prices last week were for wheat, 3*s.* 3*d.* for 70 lbs.; it is sold by the bushel of 70 lbs. Oats were 2*s.* 2*d.* for a 45 lbs. bushel.

12,490–1. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You can hardly give it in quarters because it is sold by weight?—No, they vary all the way up; a bushel in one town is 42 lbs., and in our town it is 45 lbs. It is a most anomalous business.

12,492. Is barley grown?—No barley is grown in the neighbourhood. Potatoes from 22*s.* 6*d.* to 30*s.* per ton. All these are delivered at the dealer's place: turnips, 11*s.* 6*d.* per ton; hay, from 5*l.* to 6*l.* per ton; straw, from 4*l.* to 4*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per ton.

12,493. Is there dairy produce?—Yes; butter, 1*s.* 4*d.* to 1*s.* 5*d.* per lb. delivered in the market. Milk is 3½*d.* per quart delivered to the house up to the 1st of May, and 3*d.* per quart from the 1st of May to the 10th of October.

12,494–5. Is cheese made in the district?—There is no cheese made in the Wigan Union.

12,496. And the whole of the milk produced is consumed in the neighbourhood?—Yes, and a large quantity besides.

12,497. Of course, some of those prices are at quite their lowest point?—I should say that turnips were never so low as at the present time.

12,498.—Has that been the cause of the large reduction of stock recently?—Yes.

12,499. I suppose that keep is not very plentiful?—Keep is not very plentiful excepting turnips; the root crops have been plentiful, the wet season rather favoured that to the disadvantage of other things.

12,500–1. We know that wheat at all events is quite at its lowest price?—I do not think it has been lower in our neighbourhood.

12,502. But there are other articles such as hay and straw which are exceptionally high?—Hay and straw is higher than it has been for seven years. Four years ago I bought all my hay for my own use at from 2*l.* to 2*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* per ton, believing that the price would go up.

12,503. I hope you have a good deal of it left?—I have not needed to buy any.

Stock breeding.

12,504. Can you speak as to the reduction of stock by the Wigan farmers?—It is fairly large; on some farms they have abandoned stock altogether.

12,505. Do they breed cattle?—It is not a great breeding district in consequence of the smoky atmosphere; really cattle bred in our district would soon go off. Ours is more an importing district say from the north, beyond Preston.

Characteristics of the district.

12,506. What is the character of the farming in the district?—Arable, generally.

12,507. Is there much dairy produce made?—Not a great deal.

12,508. Is it ordinary mixed farming?—It is ordinary mixed farming.

12,509. On the four-course system?—Yes.

12,510. Is arable going down to grass to any great extent?—Near the town it is almost entirely laid down to grass. Four miles from the town it is kept on the four-course system; they are compelled practically by their agreements, many of them, to keep to the four-course system.

12,511. Then all the prices that you have given do very materially affect farmers?—They do.

Reduction of rent.

12,512. And what has been done to meet the depression that you speak of?—Very little in the Wigan neighbourhood. I think on one estate there has been a reduction of from 5 to 7½ per cent.; on another estate some of the tenants have had 10 per cent., and others none. On another estate there has been none whatever; and on a fourth estate there has been what I should call fairly large reductions, that is, reductions calculated to meet the requirements of the farmer.

12,513. Is that estate of very much the same quality as the others as regards the soil?—Yes, if anything it is looked upon as rather a superior district.

12,514. What is the largest reduction made within your knowledge?—The largest is 25 per cent., and that has been made a permanent reduction, not temporary, the others are all temporary.

Existence of depression.

12,515. Has the depression been of long standing in that part of Lancashire?—It has been, you may say, gradually coming on for four or five years, but it has assumed a very acute phase these last two or three years, the last two years particularly.

12,516. You do not think the farmers have been suffering so long as those in the more southern districts of England?—I do not suppose they have.

Effect of the depression.

12,517. The depression began in the southern districts in 1879?—Yes; the farmers as a class have been deteriorating in our neighbourhood for a considerable time.

12,518. Do you mean in their financial position?—In their financial position.

12,519. Have any of them given up their farms?—Yes. I was just comparing the sales by auction. In 1874 they did not average more than three per month, and over the same area these last two years they have averaged nearly 10 per month.

12,520. I am afraid a good many of those farmers have lost a considerable part of their capital?—In many of the instances with which I am personally acquainted the sale has been a voluntary one, but this is by arrangement with the land agent, that if he would hold off the auctioneer would have authority to pay over his arrears; many of them have been under arrears of rent, and many have practically had nothing whatever when they have left their farms.

Size of farms.

12,521. What is the average size of the farms in that district?—From 40 to 100 acres.

12,522. 100 acres is quite a large farm there, is it not?—It would be considered a fairly large farm in our neighbourhood.

Buildings.

12,523. Are the buildings fairly up to the mark?—They are far from the mark. Many of them are dilapidated and ill adapted for the purposes of modern farming. Most of the houses would not be considered fit for the business, and the out-buildings, in many instances, are inadequate.

12,524. Are you speaking of large estates as well as small?—We have practically no small estates; the large bulk of the land is held by about five people.

12,525. I think you mention seven in your statement?—The bulk is held by the five. There are two others who do not own a very large part of the agricultural land.

Average rent.

12,526. What is the general range of rents?—The rents range from 1*l.* per statute acre, to 2*l.* 10*s.*, tithe and rates added.

Tithe.

12,527. Since the Tithe Act was passed has the tithe been added to the rent?—It has been added to the rent.

12,528. It has been paid by the landlord and added to the rent?—Yes.

12,529. It is the invariable practice?—Yes.

Interest on drainage and buildings.

12,530. And interest on drainage and buildings, I suppose, you would add?—Yes.

12,531. Wherever new buildings have been put up with borrowed capital, has interest been charged to the farmer?—That is so.

12,532. At what rate?—Five per cent. generally; in my own case, it is just over, with my landlord. I have protested, of course, against draining the land at all, or paying interest upon it. My argument with him was that I am entitled to have the land from him in a cultivable state in the same way that I am entitled to have my house in a habitable state, it is as much his duty to have the water taken from under my feet in the field as to have my head protected from the rain when I am in my house.

12,533. Was the water there when you took the farm?—It was there when I took the farm; he has agreed to drain the land without charging the interest.

12,534. When you took it or now?—No, not when I took it. Now, he is doing it to-day.

12,535. You have no grievance individually?—I have no grievance upon that, but I am acquainted with a large number of farms where the tenants have the interest rate added to their rent annually, and they are paying it; and in my case it was after a fair good fight that I got the concession. My neighbours are paying the interest on the drainage.

Abatements of rent.

12,536. Abatements and reductions of rent stand by themselves?—They do.

12,537. Are there no other concessions?—There are no other concessions made.

12,538. Neither indirectly or directly?—No.

12,539. Are the abatements made in cash generally?—In cash.

12,540. Not in manures?—There are no manures that I am aware of given to any farmers in our neighbourhood. They are all cash remissions.

The letting of farms.

12,541. And there is a considerable demand for farms in Lancashire, which enables the rents to keep up well, comparatively with the rest of the country?—Latterly there have been more farms advertised to let; these last two years they have let at considerable reductions.

12,542. But have they been well competed for?—Not well competed for.

12,543. You are speaking of the Wigan Union?—I confine myself to the Wigan Union; I do not profess to know the general run of Lancashire farms.

12,544. Have the farms come into the landlords' hands, to any extent?—They have.

12,545. Then would you say that the competition for farms is rapidly diminishing?—It is rapidly diminishing, and those that have been let, have been let at a considerable reduction.

12,546. If that state of things continues, no doubt rent will necessarily fall?—Rent will necessarily fall.

Agreements.

12,547. As to the nature of the agreements upon which farms are held, would you describe them?—The agreements are generally, first of all, limiting the ploughing land, describing the system of the coursing of the tillage. The tenant is liable for fences and dilapidations to buildings.

12,548. You do not mean ordinary wear and tear, under a yearly agreement, do you?—You can construe it in that way. It has been construed that way under some agreements. I know one tenant who has had to spend a lot of money on his buildings.

Laying land down to grass.

12,549. And as to the laying down to grass, what do you say?—As to the laying down to grass it is not a stipulation in the agreement—the breaking up is stipulated. The general fine for breaking up is 5*l.* per acre.

12,550. You would not complain of that, would you?—I should complain of it very often.

12,551. If you took old pasture land on entering a farm, do you consider that you would be entitled to break up that pasture land without any compensation?—I do not think that I ought to break it all up, but there are lands where the root practically becomes worn out, and it is to the interest of the landlord and the tenant that it should be broken up to get a better root.

12,552. You would not say that a tenant has a right to reduce the amount of old pasture on the farm without any reference to the landlord?—I do not think that the tenant has any right to reduce the productive farming at all. Bad farming I think should be punished.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

12,553. Are these agreements the rule in your district, and do they supersede the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes, I have never known the Agricultural Holdings Act to be brought into operation excepting once.

12,554. How was it brought into operation in that case—how did it supersede the agreements?—In this particular case that I am referring to the man had not an agreement. He was without an agreement and he went under the Act.

12,555. But these agreements are held to supersede the Act as being considered to be equally or more favourable?—I do not suppose that many of the farmers know much about the Agricultural Holdings Act.

12,556. Then there is no feeling about it one way or the other?—In this case the man was under no agreement, and he took advantage of the Act, which was both a dilatory and expensive process, and it spread dismay amongst the farmers as regards the Agricultural Holdings Act. It is considered with us a dead letter.

Mr. T. Worthington.

15 Mar. 1894.

12,557. Is there much dissatisfaction with the existing agreements, then?—Yes, many of the farmers consider the agreements exacting, and in some instances a little vexatious.

Agreements.

12,558. Are they strictly adhered to?—They are not strictly adhered to. If they were, then of course there would be a difficulty.

12,559. A good deal of latitude is naturally given to the tenant, I suppose?—There is no doubt about that.

Freedom of sale.

12,560. Are hay and straw forbidden to be sold under the covenants?—Not in all cases; it is the rule with us. We have a good hay and straw market, and the hay is allowed to be sold, providing manure for a certain sort is brought back again.

12,561. Is that largely availed of?—Yes; the hay and straw market is a big one now.

12,562. You say that the farming has deteriorated. Has the encouragement or the permission for the sale of hay largely contributed to that?—I do not think so.

12,563. You do not think that hay is sold off without an adequate return to the landlord?—I think that the farmers for every load of hay—both in hay and potatoes—have invariably taken back a load of manure.

12,564. You do not think that they mow too frequently?—I do not think so.

Dairying.

12,565. Is the dairy industry of recent introduction comparatively?—There has always been a fair quantity of milk produced in the neighbourhood.

12,566. But where butter is made, you say that the accommodation is quite insufficient?—Decidedly.

12,567. Is that because it is a comparatively new demand?—Oh, dear, no. Most of the houses are very old; very old indeed.

12,568–9. Is the land of a wet character?—On some parts it is rather clayey; on the north and north-east side of the Union it is more of a clayey soil. On the south and west it is more of a sandy subsoil, with a light moss surface.

Drainage.

12,570. For all except the last, I suppose, drainage is required?—Yes.

12,571. Has it been generally carried out?—A great deal of the land really requires draining at this moment.

12,572. Is that because the drains are worn out?—They have been worn out; there have been drains, but they have been worn out.

12,573. And is drainage not properly carried out then? Is there much of it remaining to be done?—I think there is a large area requires to be done.

12,574. Do the tenants drain to any considerable extent?—Not much; they rely upon the landlord doing the draining; the usual plan being for the tenant to carry the tiles, put them on the land, and the landlord to do the work when that is done.

12,575. But if they are invariably charged 5 per cent. interest upon the outlay that makes them reluctant to moot the question?—They will often moot the question, but demur to the interest, and the landlord will not do it unless they undertake to pay the interest.

Labourers.

12,576. As to the supply and quality of labour; has it been maintained?—Yes, the labour is rather a big item with us. We are in the neighbourhood of large works, where fairly good wages can be obtained. I keep four men on my farm, and the lowest wage I pay is 20*s.* per week, the man finding himself with everything, and the highest wage I pay is 21*s.* with a good house, rent free.

12,577. Is that the waggoner?—No, the cowman; he looks after the cattle.

12,578. What is the acreage of your farm?—95 acres.

12,579. Is there no difficulty of procuring labour at all times?—Not at any part of the year.

12,580. Have those wages increased in the last 10 years?—Yes, they have gone up considerably; a farm labourer 10 years ago would get 15*s.* per week; now you cannot get a man, even an off man, for less than 18*s.* or 19*s.*, and if you want a good man permanently you must give 1*l.* a week.

12,581. Does that include everything?—I add nothing. I will not find anything for the men.

12,582. Do you pay nothing extra in harvest time?—We pay nothing extra in harvest time. If I take them the year round, they will come for the 1*l.*, because they know that in winter there is plenty of make up time.

12,583. Can you speak as to the quality of the labour?—You can get first class men; there is no doubt about the quality.

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12,584. (*Mr. Everett.*) Did you not say that the labourer was rent free?—In one case 20*s.* includes everything.

12,585. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Then the position of the agricultural labourer has been thoroughly well maintained; he is as well off as ever?—He is as well off as a colliery labourer; or in any other department of life in our neighbourhood. He has no off time, and consequently, though another man may get 22*s.* or 23*s.* per week, take year in and year out, the agricultural labourer is better off at the end of the year; at any rate he considers so.

Rates.

12,586. Then you say something about the incidence of local rates?—Yes; of course with regard to the rates, they have gone up considerably during these last 10 or 15 years. The local boards have been established throughout the whole of the neighbourhood; they have incurred liabilities which the township, of course, is bound to meet, and many of the improvements are such that the farm labourer does not derive much benefit from them, although he is liable for his contribution.

12,587. Are you within the urban district of the town of Wigan?—Yes; I am in the next township, part of my land is in the borough. The borough boundary runs through one of my fields.

12,588. Then you are rated for sanitary and school board and other purposes?—There is not a school board in the township; there is not really a school board in Wigan, it is only nominal, it is practically an attendance committee; it has no schools.

12,589. Do you bear any part of the sanitary rates?—We have to bear them both in the out-township and in the borough, it is a Local Board district, and then it has a sanitary committee, and a water committee, and lighting committee which now lights the whole of the highways.

12,590. And you are assessed to the extent of one-fourth?—Yes, of the land, and to the full extent on the buildings, with the sixth off.

12,591. To what extent have you benefited from the expenditure?—Except the advantage of getting to and from the end of the highway, practically nothing. The sanitary part does not touch me at all.

Wigan market.

12,592. Still, I presume, that it is in your interest that the town of Wigan should be there and should continue to flourish?—It is in the interest of good government that health should prevail, and it is in the interest of farming that everybody should be healthy.

12,593. You say you have a first-class market in Wigan?—Yes, the finest out of London or Liverpool. It is not an uncommon thing to have 200 farmers there on a Friday morning with their farm produce. They sell direct to the shopkeeper. There is practically no merchant or middleman; the farmer brings his own product and he sells it to the person who retails it.

12,594. Notwithstanding the great advantage that Wigan is, do you think it a grievance?—I do not think it a grievance.

12,595. I mean that you have to share so largely in the expenses of the borough?—I do not complain of the expenses of the borough, but it is mainly the out-townships that surround the town that have to pay.

12,596. What is the distance of your district from the town?—Two and a half miles from the centre of the market.

Re-adjustment of rent.

12,597. Now as to the remedies for the present state of things, what would you suggest; take rent, for instance?—I think, in fact I am certain, that there ought to be a re-adjustment of the rents. I referred to one estate where the rents had been reduced 25 per cent. I believe that that estate is not only well managed, but that the rent is satisfactory to the tenants on that estate. There are, as I said, large estates in the immediate neighbourhood where little, in some instances no, reductions have been made, and the farmers on those estates are certainly suffering and are at a disadvantage as compared with their neighbours.

12,598. Then you consider the landlords are not making any efforts to maintain the tenants on their property ?—That is so. Many of them, if I might say so, in three of the largest cases are absentee landlords altogether. In my own case I do not know, I should not know, my landlord if I met him.

12,599. He has not a mansion house there ?—He has no residence there whatever. I do not know where he lives. I do not know whether he is in this country or any other.

Land Courts.

12,600. Then how would you adjust the rents on a fair basis ?—So far as the farmers that I represent are concerned we believe that the fairest method of adjusting the rent would be through a land court constituted of legal gentlemen assisted by one or two persons representing both interests.

12,601. I take it that you are generally in accord with the Bill presented by Mr. Smith ? — Generally that is so.

12,602. Is your association affiliated to his association ? —It is affiliated to the Tenant Farmers' Federation.

12,603. In the manner proposed in that Bill, you think that rents should be adjusted ?—Yes.

12,604. Would you be satisfied with such an adjustment of rents ?—No, I do not think that that is the whole of the remedy, I think that is a very small part of the agricultural depression, very small indeed.

Fixity of tenure.

12,605. What would you further suggest ?—I would further suggest fixity of tenure.

12,606. In the manner proposed by that Bill ?—Yes.

12,607. By a reference to the court every five years ? —Yes.

12,608. What, in your opinion, would be the effect upon the landlord's expenditure by such a measure as that—I mean his expenditure upon farm buildings and drainage ?—I think the landlord in that case would be willing to expend money sufficient to put his farm in first class condition for the tenant. I do not think a reasonable landlord would limit his expenditure in consequence of the fixity of tenure.

12,609. Do you think that he would get a return for his outlay, as much as he would get if he put it into Consols ?—I think he would.

12,610. Are you speaking strictly of your district ?— I am. With regard to my buildings they are entirely inadequate. I have agreed with my landlord to pay him 3 per cent. upon the buildings that he shall erect, and I believe that if fixity of tenure was to be brought about at the end of five years even in a land court he would have awarded to him as against me, for rent, quite as much as I have agreed to pay him.

Right of landowners to inspect property.

12,611. Would you debar the landowners from setting foot upon his land, as is proposed in Mr. Smith's Bill ? —I should not debar him from setting foot upon it. I think he ought to have the right to inspect it.

12,612. It is subject to that right in the Bill, but to that right alone ?—If the land is farmed I do not think that he has very much more to do with it.

12,613. You think that all sporting rights should be transferred from the owner to the tenant ?—I think that those who keep should kill.

12,614. Notwithstanding any agreement to the contrary ?—I do not think that there should be an agreement for one to keep, and the other to kill.

12,615. Then the relation between landlord and tenant would be an absolutely business relation ?— Certainly ; just like taking a shop.

12,616. And any outlay by the landlord on his property would be made in a purely commercial spirit ?— Decidedly.

12,617. What pride or satisfaction would he have in the land if the property was not practically his ?—The pride of seeing his farm in splendid condition, and seeing his tenant making ends meet, would, I should think, be the highest pride that could animate a man's mind.

12,618. But he would have to see his buildings from the high road, and not from any other point of view ?— I cannot conceive a man so much at variance with his tenant that he should have to look through a telescope at his farm.

12,619. He would not have the right to look at the property unless there was a public footpath through it ?—I should think that he should have a perfect right to see that the land is cultivated, and that it is not deteriorating.

12,620. At all times ?—Yes.

12,621. I do not think that that is the provision in the Bill ?—I could not conceive of a state of things where a land court, having fixed the rent for five years, would set these people as long away from each other as possible.

12,622. He is allowed to go on to the land for certain purposes only. It says that any person authorised by the landlord can have the right to enter upon the holding for "viewing or examining at reasonable times the state of the holding." Those are the only purposes for which he can enter upon the farm ?—That is so.

Insecurity of tenure.

12,623. Are you of opinion that the sense of insecurity is so deep and widespread that it affects considerably the cultivation of the soil ?—I am certainly of that opinion.

12,624. What was the case before the depression arose ? You held under the same tenure, I suppose ? Was farming bad at that time, and the expenditure of tenants' capital insufficient ?—I believe for many years the expenditure of tenants' capital has been inadequate to the requirements of the land ; for many years that has been so.

12,625. But I mean before the depression set in ; I am speaking of the more prosperous times ?—I do not think even then that everything was done to the land that the tenant ought to do. I know plenty of farmers who, in the prosperous times, preferred to put their money into cottage property, or shop property, or mortgages, rather than invest in the land further.

12,626. Is that because they considered that they were liable to capricious and unreasonable eviction, or because they doubted whether, under their agreements, they would be able to get the capital back again ?—I do not think that vexatious eviction was one of the great frights. Personally, I do not know a single vexatious eviction in the neighbourhood.

12,627. You do not think that the fear of it really operates upon the minds of the tenants ?—This fear more operates : that if a person has his farm in what I call first class condition, he does not get the same attention and appliances to any requirement of his from the landlord, that he would if his farm was not in first class condition. I have a case in my mind of that sort. One of the largest farms in the Wigan Union was known to be in the very best condition ; the farmer saw that the decline of price was largely interfering with his profit, and he immediately applied for a reduction, and the agent who was living at that time —I am bound to say, an imperious man—began at once by saying that if he did not like it he could go ; he knew perfectly well that he could let the farm at the same rent, because of its high condition. The man did leave the farm practically without a penny of compensation. The farm has been let twice since then within the last seven years, and to-day it stands at half the rent that that man paid, because those who have been in the farm have gradually deteriorated it.

12,628. Did the tenant who took the farm immediately after him hold it at an increased rent ?—He held it at a reduction shortly after.

12,629. The landlord has not profited then ?—He paid the same rent at the beginning and then he got a reduction, but he cleared off and another man succeeded him, and is paying half the rent that he was paying. If the good farmer had had a reduction he would be there now. It is a premium upon bad farming when they go away and leave a poor farm, and a reduction takes place because no one will have the farm.

Free sale of improvements.

12,630. You further propose a free sale of improvements ?—That is so. I will take my own case. For three years upon one part of my land I have practically spent 100*l*. more than I have received to get the farm into what I call first-class condition ; my contention is that that investment of mine in the land should be as much mine, and as much at my disposal as if I had put it in Consols instead of putting it into land.

12,631. What is the nature of the expenditure of that 100*l*. ?—In manures—not in what I should call highly excitable manures, but in farm-yard manures. I bought lime and farm-yard manure in the town and carted them.

12,632. When you came into your farm I gather that you came in on comparatively favourable terms ?—Yes, I did; I came in on the value that it was then, I struck my bargain.

12,633. And you paid your predecessor a great deal less than you will receive from your successor if you have "free sale"?—I paid my predecessor practically nothing; he had reduced it to common land. I expect the difference between the farm as is was, almost common land, and what I am leaving, that is what I expect.

12,634–5. Your successor would come in with a pretty heavy load upon his shoulders?—My successor would come in for the difference in the value which either he or the landlord would have to pay. If you will allow me I might say that I have two neighbours, both at this moment on the look-out for farms. I know it. Now their farms are gradually deteriorating year by year, and they know that they can practically get nothing, and they are going to be sure that they will leave nothing.

12,636. But is that not due, to some extent at all events, to loss of capital, owing to the terrible fall of prices?—They have lost some capital, but if they had fixity of tenure, and free sale of their improvements, they would largely have increased the product upon their farms as I have done.

12,637. Notwithstanding the agricultural outlook?—Notwithstanding the agricultural outlook. I cannot conceive that for ever the agricultural business of this country is going to be in the state in which it is now.

Technical instruction.

12,638. I hope not, I am sure. Then, lastly, I believe you wish to say something as to agricultural education. What is done in your neighbourhood in that direction?—For the first time with regard to agricultural education the Lancashire County Council have sent round, I do not want to use a ridiculous word, but something in the shape of a circus, a sort of tent with churns and a lecturer on dairying—that has been a sort of travelling affair—but I cannot say that it has done much for the farmers, and in Wigan as a centre, they have had, I think, three lectures. I attended those lectures myself; but I should consider that the whole of the money was as good as thrown away.

12,639. Was that because the teaching was of an inefficient description?—I think the people did not understand what the man was talking about.

12,640. How would you teach it?—The way I think that they ought to be taught, of course a great many of us are past teaching.

12,641. Who are you speaking of, the farmers?—I am speaking of farmers who hold their farms, and many of them are from 40 to 60 years of age; their opportunities are too few, and they could not be spared from their farms to go to any school to learn a new method. I think myself with regard to agricultural teaching it should be scientific and practical combined, that attention should be given to agriculture such as we see given to it in America and in Canada.

12,642. You are speaking of model farms?—I have been there and seen their farms, and in my opinion if in our great counties we had fairly large farms where, say, 20 or 25 young men from 18 to 21 years of age could be sent, dividing the instruction in the school, if I may call it so, and in the forenoon for half of them to go to the school, and the other half in the afternoon, and alternately work on the farm and putting their knowledge into practice, I think that would be a far better way of increasing the knowledge and practice of agriculture; I do not suppose that you could find one man in a hundred who knows anything beyond rule of thumb work in connexion with the character of his soil, and few, exceedingly few, know anything about the nature of the plant that they grow, or what that plant will best feed on. If you talk to them about nitrogen, or potash, or phosphates it means practically nothing to them; it is a foreign language altogether and a foreign idea.

12,643. You are the very first farmer we have had here who has taken that view. In every case when the question has been put to the witnesses they have been dead against instruction in the principles or theory of agriculture?—Against it!

12,644. Against it?—Then you can know what construction to put upon those witness's evidence. Of course where ignorance is bliss,——If a man does not think it is wise to know he never will know.

12,645. How many farms of that sort would you establish in a county like Lancashire?—Lancashire is a fairly good county, I should think one or two good farms. Take the North Lonsdale Division, which stretches right to Barrow, the county is over 100 miles long from point to point, the class of farming that would do for the northern part would not do at all for the southern part because they have a rocky land in the north, and I should say that two farms, one in the southern part of the county and the other in the northern part of the county, would be sufficient. Lancashire is so wealthy that it could well afford them.

12,646. Not out of the grant entirely?—Not out of the grant entirely.

12,647. Would you do anything for the education of the labourers?—I should certainly in the schools, particularly in the agricultural districts, instead of reading all sorts of nonsense I should like them to read something practical and interesting. In our elementary schools they teach them all sorts of action and all sorts of Kindergarten exercises. I think if the reading books were adapted to the kind of work that the boys and girls would have to do in after life, and that they were trained in action in some of those things it would be a large help and development to agriculture.

12,648. But you think that the technical education at present afforded through the County Councils is on mistaken lines?—I am certain that it is, and I think they themselves will agree that they have thrown a good deal of their money away up to now. I know many of them, and I cannot find one that can justify it, and the fact that they are thinking of altering the course shows that they do not think they have got value for their money yet.

12,649. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Then we are to understand from you that you think the farming class in England are generally very uneducated for their work?—I speak of those around me.

12,650. You confine yourself to them?—Yes, because I do not wish to insult some one further off. But the class about my neighbourhood I do not consider are anything like educated to what they ought to be for the business they are in. In my own opinion there is not a business that presents so many problems of a technical and difficult character as agriculture itself.

Leases.

12,651. Are there any farms held on lease at Wigan?—I do not know of any.

12,652. Were they formerly?—Years ago. There were some held on a 14-years' lease.

12,653. When did they cease to take leases?—About 1879 and 1880.

12,654. That was not owing to the depression of agriculture, because, I think, you told us that until the last three or four years, in your neighbourhood, agricultural depression has not been felt?—Not a great deal, so far as I can gather. About 1880 the leases began to be given up.

12,655. And now they are never taken?—I do not know one. They are taken from year to year as a rule.

12,656. Is that because the tenant farmer does not wish to take them, or because the landlord will not grant them?—I think that it is more on the tenant farmer's side; that he does not want a lease; he would rather take his chance of being able to give up when he wants to.

12,657. How much notice must either side give in your agreement?—Twelve months—in some instances six months; but, of course, the notice commences on the 2nd of February for the land, and on the 12th of May for the building. In many instances I think that is rather a stupid arrangement—the land and the building should be given up at the same time.

Dilapidations.

12,658. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) In your statement under the head of "Restrictions" you say the tenant is liable for dilapidations, will you say how those dilapidations are assessed?—I think I said only in one case had I known that to be put into operation. I did in one case and that was assessed by going through the whole of the buildings and outside chambers and spouts and that kind of thing and ordering them all to be replaced or mended.

12,659. And that would apply to gates and gate posts?—To gates and gate posts.

Effect of the depression.

12,660. Is there any difficulty in letting the land in the Wigan Union?—There has been great difficulty and there are many farms to let at this moment, they are advertised in the papers.

12,661. Is there any land out of cultivation absolutely?—I do not think so. The landlord of course, takes it in hand whenever it is vacant.

Small holdings.

12,662. They are all comparatively small holdings ranging from 50 to 100 acres?—I said from 40 acres upwards.

12,663. Are there any smaller holding than that where the people live?—There are some farms of less than 40 acres, but as a rule, the family although they live in the house go to other kinds of work.

Fruit growing.

12,664. Do they cultivate fruit to any extent?—It is not cultivated to a large extent with us. The smoky character of the district in the immediate neighbourhood of the town prevents it. Just outside the union there is a pretty large fruit culture.

12,665. Having such a fine market there ought to be more opportunities for fruit growing?—As soon as you get out of the smoky region which is rather outside the union, then fruit is grown pretty largely, and disposed of in the market.

12,666. Is the cultivation of fruit profitable under such circumstances?—I believe so.

Vegetable growing.

12,667. As regards vegetables, is that a profitable cultivation?—It is said to be so. I do not cultivate many vegetables, but those who do consider that they make a fair profit out of it.

12,668. It is not largely cultivated?—It is not largely cultivated.

12,669. Ought it not to be largely cultivated, seeing that there is such a large market?—If there was more diversity in the cultivation of the land, the farming would pay better.

12,670. Would not vegetable growing, in those circumstances, be a remedy for agricultural depression to some considerable extent?—I think it would.

12,671. Why not adopt it?—It would involve a higher state of cultivation and more labour, and unless a farmer feels that he will be compensated for the investment of his capital, and that it is his own, he will not go into it.

12,672. Would that require more education?—That would require more education.

Labour.

12,673. With regard to labour, do the women work in your district?—Not a great many of them.

12,674. Do the farmers and their families work themselves as a rule?—Yes, as a rule.

12,675. Does that apply to farmers with as many as 100 acres?—Yes.

12,676. They would not, of course, keep bailiffs?—No.

Technical instruction.

12,677. With regard to agricultural education, can you tell me whether, in the agricultural experiments connected with America, pupils are taught as you suggest they should be taught in England?—In some places they are, I believe.

12,678. I thought the agricultural experimental stations applied only to the experiments for the good of agriculture generally, and that they were not schools?—In some instances I think the farmers' sons have opportunities of going to experimental stations. I had a letter from Secretary Rusk, who died a few weeks ago, saying that they encouraged the farmers to send their sons to the experimental stations.

12,679. Would you suggest that such experimental stations should be provided by the county councils or the Government?—I should say by the county councils.

12,680. Where they would expend the grants?—Yes; and I think, in connection with that, that where a farmer sends his sons, say at 18 years of age for two years, that the farmer should be compensated for the loss of their labour—slightly compensated for the son for two years.

12,681. Do you mean that there should be a grant made to him in that respect?—I would not compensate him fully.

12,682. You are not aware that that does hold in some counties, for instance, at Swanley in Kent?—I am not aware of that.

12,683. That is so; that might be applied equally in Lancashire, might it not?—I think so.

12,684. Do you not think that teaching by lectures would answer in course of time when the lectures are levelled up to the proper mark in chemistry and botany. Would not that convey instruction to the pupils?—Yes, I think so; I think that you learn some parts of it away from the experimental farm.

12,685. And that might obviate the necessity of establishing one?—It would lessen it.

12,686. In Germany that system prevails, and lecturers are sent to the farmers and labourers there?—I think so.

12,687. Might not that be adopted by the county councils?—I think so; that might be done on all those subjects where practical work is not actually required.

12,688. With regard to agricultural experimental stations, that would be necessary irrespective of the teaching of the pupils?—I should certainly think an experimental farm useful.

12,689. Would you have them in every county?—In every county.

12,690. Notwithstanding that the Royal Agricultural Society, and other large societies in England, institute experiments?—I do not think that it is possible to be in touch with the Royal Agricultural Society.

12,691. Why?—In the first place it would be almost unmanageable to bring them into touch with the different counties. I think in the counties where the farmers were contributing, they would be more in sympathy with the farming which was amongst themselves. I do not think that many farmers even in connection with the late Manchester and Liverpool Society made themselves acquainted with the experiments carried on at Saltney.

12,692. That is rather their fault, is it not?—That rather confirms what the Chairman said that they object to education.

12,693. It is not so much want of teaching power as the unwillingness to be taught?—Yes, the disposition to be taught is to be cultivated yet.

Position of tenants.

12,694. (*Mr. Clay.*) In profitable times had the tenants sufficient capital to farm the land?—I think many of them had.

12,695. Was their financial position sound in prosperous times?—I think so.

12,696. Since the bad times came, do the landlords meet them in time to save them?—That has not been so in my neighbourhood.

12,697. If they had met them they would have been in a better position to keep up the cultivation of the soil?—I think so.

12,698. I gather from you that the tenants in your district are afraid to put capital into the land for the want of sufficient compensation?—That I believe.

12,699. You only believe it?—Those that I have come into contact with have said so.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

12,700. And they do not take advantage of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—That is considered a dead letter with us.

12,701. What is the reason of that?—In the first place, the procedure is slow and cumbersome, and so far as the reported cases that we have heard of go, the tenant has almost always been swamped by a counterclaim. Of course the counter-claim has never been delivered until his claim has been given in, and the counter-claim has always been the largest, and the fight, as a rule, has been expensive, so that people would prefer getting all out of the land rather than leave it in and try to get it afterwards.

Land Courts.

12,702. But if the expense of the procedure in getting compensation was modified and brought into a narrow compass, would you say that that would be an advantage?—That is what we propose, that there should be a land court with two practical men sitting as assessors with the judge, or whoever is the legal person; that it should be simpler and less complicated.

12,703. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Would you give the judge a casting vote in the event of a difference of opinion between the two assessors?—I think I would; as a rule judges are common sense men.

12,704. (*Mr. Clay.*) Those men would not only fix the compensation, but fix the rent?—Fix the future rent.

Land Courts and wages.

12,705. Would then this court have anything to say in regard to the labourers' wages?—No, I do not think it should do that.

12,706. Why not the labourer as well as the tenant?—I should be in favour of the labourer having a fair wage, but too many references under one head I think would hardly be advisable.

12,707. You would not allow the labourer to come under the same principle and have his wage fixed as you would the tenant, in regard to the rent which he has to pay to the landlord for the farm?—I would put the labourer on a little different footing. In the first place he has nothing at stake in the farm. I should like though to say that I should want the labourer to be dealt justly by. This is not exactly the time perhaps for saying what I should like the labourer to have, but I do not think it would be satisfactory to go to court to fix a fair rent, and also to bring in all the expenditure which is to take place upon the farm, and how it is to be done.

12,708. In the past do you think that the labourer has ever had his fair share of a living wage out of the land?—I do not.

Technical instruction.

12,709. Regarding the mode of teaching the young farmer or the labourer, you have referred to Canada, I think. You have been there yourself you say?—I have just had a run through.

12,710. Have you seen any of the colleges or experimental farms?—I have not been on them. I have only been to the headquarters of the Government, I have only been to Ottawa. I have only heard a description of the farms, and I have not been on them.

12,711. So that you have not seen that well-equipped college or farm to teach the Canadians in Guelph?—I have not.

12,712. Have you heard about it?—I have heard about it but I have not seen it.

12,713. The young farmers and the young labourers can afford to go there for a certain time, I believe?—Yes.

12,714. And there they see both the theoretical part of farming as well as the practical?—Yes, I believe that is so.

12,715. But you cannot speak to it?—I cannot speak from observation.

Position of landlords.

12,716. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Have you any knowledge as to the position of the landlords in your district; are they men of substance or are they men in the opposite position?—Will you describe the "opposite position."

12,717. I mean men without capital who are relying upon incomes from their estates?—Upon one estate the landlord, I believe, is largely hampered by mortgages and it would be almost impossible for him of his own will to give reductions. On another estate the lady who owns it, or in whose name it stands, cannot live at the Hall at the present time and cannot give reductions. In most cases the landlords are not in a position to grant reductions in our neighbourhood.

12,718. You also mentioned that the farmers there had the benefit of selling the produce direct without any middleman, as a rule?—That is so.

Sale of cattle: (*a*) by auction;

12,719. In the case of their cattle do they sell them by auction, or how?—Very rarely by auction.

12,720. Do they sell their fat stock direct?—Their fat stock are sold straight to the butcher. My own plan has been when the market has been high to sell to the butcher, and when it has been low to kill them myself and sell them to the people. That plan I have advocated with the farmers.

(*b*) by live-weight.

12,721. Has your association had the subject of the weighing of cattle brought before them? Have they discussed it?—They have not discussed it largely. For myself I have a weighing machine, and I weigh my own cattle before I sell them, and I calculate the price upon the live weight.

12,722. Do you consider that is a great help to you?—Yes. Of course I have had to fight the butchers. They do not like a weighbridge. A butcher who buys so many cattle per week likes to pit his judgment against the farmer who only sells one beast a fortnight.

12,723. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Will the butcher take your weights?—Yes; I generally sell them hand over hand, as it is called, by the lump, that is; but every butcher who buys off me knows that they have been on the weighbridge before I quote.

12,724. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) You practically do not want merchants, because you weigh your cattle?—We do not need merchants.

12,725. And you have always some party who will buy?—Yes; we have such a large population in the Union that we can always sell what we have to sell. I may say in regard to cattle that perhaps we have suffered as much in that as anything. We are near to Liverpool and Birkenhead, and where 30 butchers of Wigan used to kill their own meat, I do not suppose there are more than four killing now; they can slip off to Birkenhead by train, buy at the lairage, bring the meat back by the next train or have it sent on by goods train, and it is in their place almost immediately. A butcher now does not work all the week round, he generally works from Friday morning till Monday at dinner time, sometimes only till Saturday night.

The marking of foreign meat.

12,726. Has your Association had the question of the marking of foreign meat before it?—We are in favour of all foreign meat being marked and sold as foreign meat.

12,727. Have you considered the practicability of marking meat so that it can be recognised when it reaches the consumer in the small proportions in which he buys it?—We see that there is a great difficulty in that. I may say that in our own town there is not a great amount of deception upon that point, because the shops are specially labelled for foreign food.

12,728. They are so at the present time?—They are; they make no secret about it that the beef that they sell is foreign, and they sell the biggest quantities.

12,729. Do not the shops where foreign meat is sold entirely keep themselves to the sale of foreign meat?—Some of our largest shops keep themselves entirely to the sale of foreign meat. There are some butchers who mix and who do not say that it is mixed.

12,730. Then probably the result of your discussion of this matter is to make all who sell foreign meat declare that they do so?—That is what we want. We should be glad for that to be done.

12,731. I think I understood you to say that in your opinion the farmers in your district do not possess a very sufficient knowledge of farming?—I do not think they do.

12,732. Are these men members of the association?—Yes.

Land Courts.

12,733. And these same men are those who desire to have a land court?—They do.

12,734. Is that because they do not possess the qualification for making their own bargains?—No.

12,735. Why?—It is because they want somebody who can hear both sides and decide between them; they do not consider that they are in a fair position to make the bargain always, because the word to them is, "You can either take it or leave it." Now, many of them do not want to leave, and they do not want to take; they want somebody to settle what it is to be, in order that they can stop.

12,736. They do not want to leave, because they yet see that there is a good living to be made out of the land?—They do not want to leave, because they have an opinion that if they have their farms upon secured tenure and fair conditions they could yet make a living. They believe that by meeting them they could yet make a living, and some of them do not know how to get a living in any other way. To turn those men off the farm would simply be this: they cannot go into the mines, and they cannot get into the workshops; they would simply become street sweepers.

The Federation of Tenant Farmers' Association.

12,737. (*Mr. Little.*) The Farmers' Association that you represent I think you said had 136 members?—133 I think I said.

12,738. Are they *bonâ fide* tenant farmers?—Every one is a tenant farmer direct.

12,739. Is it a condition of membership that a man should be a tenant farmer?—It is.

12,740. Is it laid down in the rules?—It is.

12,741. Is there a subscription?—There is an annual subscription.

12,742. And you hold meetings for the expression of opinion on agricultural topics?—We do.

Particulars of witness's farm.

12,743. I think you said that you farm 95 acres?—That is so.

12,744. Is that your sole occupation?—No.

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12,745. You do not depend upon this farm chiefly for your living then?—I depend partly upon that and partly upon an auctioneering business that I have.

12,746. Carried on in combination with the farm?—Yes; in combination with it.

12,747. Your farm is in close proximity to a large town, I believe?—It is.

12,748. Do you object to tell us what the rent is?—135*l.* is what I pay for the land.

12,749. Do you pay tithe in addition?—I pay tithe in addition.

12,750. What would the tithe be?—4*l.* 8*s.* 7*d.*; it is a light tithe.

12,751. And ordinary rates?—Ordinary rates.

12,752. How much of the land is arable?—40 acres.

12,753. And is the remainder in permanent pasture?—Yes.

12,754. Can you mow the whole of it?—Yes.

12,755. It can all be mown?—Yes.

12,756. What does the rent cover in the shape of house and buildings; is there a farm house?—There is a farm house, and I have two cottages in connection with it.

12,757. Included in the rent?—Included in the rent. I get 14*l.* 6*s.* for the cottages.

12,758. Then the cottages are not included in the rent?—The cottages are included in the rent, and I draw the rent of the cottages. It is 135*l.* less 14*l.* 6*s.*

12,759. The 135*l.* then is for the rent of the farm-house, 95 acres of land, and two cottages?—Yes.

12,760. And buildings?—Yes; but very few buildings.

12,761. Sufficient buildings for 95 acres of land?—No; I have had to erect buildings for my cattle; the buildings were not fit to put the cattle in so I put buildings up myself.

12,762. How is the 40 acres of land employed?—The 40 is on the four course system. We often first of all plough for potatoes, or if we are breaking up from the clover root we take off a crop of oats, follow on with potatoes or turnips, then take off a crop of oats and lay it down with clover seeds and rye grass for two years.

12,763. That is really a five course?—Yes, it is really a five course. In some instances we have to plough it after the first year because it is not a root that sticks very well.

12,764. You consume the hay, I understand, on your farm?—I consume everything off my farm except perhaps a few excess turnips, and I spend, as a rule, 300*l.* a year in provender besides.

12,765. The potatoes, I presume, you sell?—We often give the cattle the potatoes at the price they are now.

Price of potatoes.

12,766. (*Mr. Clay.*) What did you say was the price per ton for potatoes just now?—The potatoes are from 22*s.* 6*d.* to 30*s.* delivered to the shopkeeper.

12,767. Do you consider that a poor price?—I do.

Particulars of witness's agreement.

12,768. (*Mr. Little.*) You hold on a yearly agreement?—Yes.

12,769. What are the conditions of that agreement?—My conditions are very fair. After I have paid the rent I have practically no conditions.

12,770. You use the land as you please?—Yes.

12,771. And sell what you please?—I do.

12,772. Are you bound to return to the land a particular specified quantity or a specified description of manure?—No. I have all the conditions I am advocating here.

12,773. Have you any separate agreement for the manures?—No.

12,774. Or feeding stuffs?—I have taken my farm like taking a house. When I have paid the rent I am master of the show.

Agreements.

12,775. Is it usual in the agreements under which the tenants hold their farms to give compensation for manures and feeding stuffs?—If they can get it from the succeeding tenant, the landlords do not give it.

12,776. Does the agreement provide for any such compensation?—No.

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12,777. Then if the agreement does not provide for any compensation they might have a claim under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—That is what they might have.

12,778. Does custom give any?—No.

12,779. Nothing?—No, except for seeds.

12,780. Simply the cost of sowing the seeds?—Yes; and that is often referred to two local valuers, or "burly" men, as they are called in the townships.

12,781. Is it usual in these agreements to prescribe a return for hay and straw sold?—It is.

12,782. What is the usual agreement?—The usual agreement is that for every load of hay that is taken away they should bring back a load of manure.

12,783. How much is a load of hay?—A ton.

12,784. How much is a load of manure?—Two tons.

12,785. That is considered an equivalent?—Yes.

Land courts. Fair rents.

12,786. You propose a court to fix rents; how do you suppose that the value of a farm shall be ascertained if you exclude competition altogether?—I should say that what would be taken into account would be the character of the soil, its possible production, its distance from a market, and its general surroundings. I recognise a great difficulty in defining what is a fair rent. My own opinion is that, if an agreement could be come to of a profit of so much per acre after paying for all labour and all out-goings, that would be the best way of fixing a fair rent.

12,787. The profit that could be made by a skilled farmer do you mean?—Yes. I would not give any quarter to unskilled farmers.

12,788. You would assume that they would manage the land in the best way that it could possibly be done?—That is so.

12,789. That would not benefit bad farmers?—I would cast bad farmers out.

12,790. You mean you would improve them by a process of elimination?—That is what I would do.

12,791. Then you would substitute for the higgling of the market the opinion of experts?—Yes.

12,792. And you think that would be satisfactory?—I think that would be best.

Valuation of improvements.

12,793. Would you leave the Land Court to decide questions of valuation of improvements?—Yes.

12,794. How would they ascertain the value of the improvements?—I should say that on a person going on to the farm a record book should be kept at the Land Court, containing a full specification of the condition of the farm when he went on, and that that should be the basis from which improvements should be calculated.

12,795. This court must take evidence to ascertain the facts?—Yes.

12,796. Do you suppose that that would be a less expensive process than a valuation under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I would make it less expensive; I would limit the expenses.

12,797. The expenses depend upon the cost of proving the facts?—There would not need to be many witnesses on either side to do that.

12,798. There might be?—Yes, there might be.

12,799. You cannot employ experts without paying them?—The assessors I admit would have to be paid.

12,800. If they are worthy of their position they must be gentlemen who are entitled to some considerable pay?—That is so.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

12,801. One instance of the Agricultural Holdings Act being taken advantage of has been sufficient to disgust the whole of your neighbourhood I understand?—That and the reports that have come into the newspaper of a great many other cases.

12,802. It is not that there are no improvements for claims to be made upon?—I think in many instances persons have improved their farms but when they have made up their minds to move they have run out their improvements rather than run the risk of the Agricultural Holdings Act; that is what I should do.

12,803. They have left nothing, and therefore they have not claimed?—That is so.

Land Courts.

12,804. Do you think that the establishment of a Land Court would induce them to improve by securing them compensation?—I think so.

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Slaughter of foreign cattle.

12,805. To pass to another subject, has your Association discussed the slaughter of foreign animals at the ports, and expressed any opinion with regard to it?—They are in favour of slaughter at the port of landing.

12,806. Has tuberculosis been prevalent in your neighbourhood?—Not largely.

12,807. Has it not been the subject of discussion?—It has not come to what we might call an epidemic; there is no doubt there have been odd instances, but the supervision of the local authorities is very keen.

The Federation of Tenant Farmers' Associations

12,808. Are you, may I ask, the secretary of the Tenant Farmers' Association that Mr. Smith belongs to?—I am not the general secretary. I am only the Secretary of the Wigan Association.

12,809. I think Mr. Smith led us to believe that you would give us some information as to the number of members?—I could not tell you that. I am not the general secretary.

12,810. Who is the general secretary?—Mr. Dutton, of Chester. The membership is growing.

12,811. But you do not know the number of members?—I could not say.

12,812. Do you know the condition of membership?—The condition of membership in all cases is subscription and being a *bonâ fide* tenant farmer.

Leases and fixity of tenure.

12,813. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is not the fact that the tenants are not willing to take leases in your neighbourhood rather an indication that they do not desire fixity of tenure?—No, it is not an indication in that direction. A man takes a lease, we will say, for 10 years now; he does not know how he is going to work between now and the end of 10 years because there has been such a change in agriculture. He would rather take the thing as it comes now.

12,814. He takes it now from year to year?—He does.

12,815. If you had this Land Tenure Bill, would he not be compelled to take it for five years?—He would.

12,816. That would be a species of lease?—It would be.

12,817. Do you think he would wish to do that?—I do not think he would object. It would only be a short lease.

12,818. But there are no short leases at present?—There are no short leases. I do not suppose any landlord would grant a five years' lease; he would hardly get his course through in the time.

12,819. What is the precise position that a tenant would take who came in under the Land Tenure Bill; would he be compelled to remain in for five years when the rent was fixed?—He would be compelled if he could afford to; if things went so adverse to him that he went bankrupt that of course would end him.

12,820. I mean if he was solvent?—If he was solvent he would have to stop in or find somebody else.

12,821. For five years?—For five years.

12,822. At the end of that time, he might remain on from year to year?—At the end of the 5 years he would have to have his rent fixed again I should say.

12,823. For another 5 years?—For another 5 years, unless the landlord and he agreed. I take it, to begin with, that nobody is compelled to go to the Land Court, that, if my landlord and I agree for 5 years, we can simply take our consent, like we can take a consent to a prognient and we can have the consent entered in the court without any hearing whatever.

Land Courts.

12,824. (*Viscount Cobham.*) It has to be registered?—Yes, I think that would be so. We should discuss this matter ourselves first to see if we could settle. If we could settle, we should come to terms and we could go and register our terms in the land court just as though we had made a consent to a judgment after being sued; and that should be a binding process, as if we had gone before two assessors. My own opinion is that the fact of there being a Land Court, would do away with nine-tenths of the appeals, and that people would come to terms knowing that if they do not, there would be something to compel them to come to terms. I believe that most landlords would meet their tenants.

Reduction of rent.

12,825. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Do you consider your own rent is too high at the present time?—No.

12,826. Has it been raised at all in consequence of the great improvements that you have carried out?—No; I took mine at a big reduction.

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12,827. And it has remained at that reduction?—Yes.

12,828. I think you say that some farms in the neighbourhood have lately been let at considerable reductions?—On some estates.

12,829. Can you say to what extent those reductions have been made?—25 per cent.

Value of land.

12,830. Have any sales of farms taken place in your neighbourhood?—There have been a few sales of freehold farms.

12,831. Has the price gone down?—The price has gone down.

12,832. To what extent?—I believe the last lot of farms that were sold formerly used to command about 100*l.* per statute acre, and I believe when they were sold they went down to 60*l.* If I might interpolate here, as a proof of what I said with regard to the effect of security of tenure on farming I might say that this was on Sir Thomas Hesketh's estate. He disposed of some out-lying farms, or rather he consolidated his estate and some of the farmers bought their own holdings. I have seen those farms. The expenditure in lime and other manures, has been very extensive, and most of those farmers have told me that they have been fully recouped for the high class farming into which they have gone, knowing that it is their own farm. That is rather out of the Wigan Union; it really adjoins the Ormskirk and Preston Unions, but I can speak personally to that.

12,833. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Would many farmers buy if they had an opportunity?—Most farmers could not afford it just now. Where a farmer can afford it or where he can make arrangements to borrow money to add to the money he has, he has been disposed to buy and is desirous of buying. I have assisted in one or two instances in the purchase of farms, and I do not hesitate to say that the difference to anybody who has seen the farm before the purchase and say two or three years after the purchase, is apparent.

12,834. By the same man?—By the same man.

Rates.

12,835. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Can you give me what the total rate in the pound paid on your farm is in the borough and in the Local Board District?—Yes.

12,836. Paid on the land I mean after allowing for the one-fourth?—The land rate would be for district purposes 10*d.* in the £.

12,837. That would not be the total rates would it?—No, the poor rate of course is paid in full, 2*s.* 1*d.*

12,838. 2*s.* 1*d.* poor rate?—Yes, that is rather heavy. Then in the country in the outside township the district rate would be 8*d.* in the £. on the land and 2*s.* 8*d.* on the building of course.

12,839. And the poor rate the same, 2*s.* 1*d.*?—The poor rate would be 1*s.* 6*d.*

12,840. Then it comes to 2*s.* 2*d.* in the Local Board district and 2*s.* 11*d.* in the borough part?—Yes.

12,841. Do you think that is too high a rate to pay for a farm in such a near neighbourhood to the borough?—I think this, that the expenditure is often incurred for many things that the farmer gets no advantage from.

12,842. On the other hand he gets the advantage of the market?—Yes.

12,843. And has not the market been provided from the same rates?—No, not from the borough rates.

12,844. What from?—Really the market has been provided without the rates because the tolls are so high that the Corporation make a profit of 3,000*l.* a year out of it.

12,845. After paying ——?—Interest on capital and everything.

12,846. For the capital cost?—Yes, they contributed to the district rate last year 1,800*l.* after providing for sinking fund and everything else. It is one of the most successful markets in England.

12,847. What alteration do you recommend in the law relating to rates?—I should say that agricultural land should be rated in proportion to its production. I, we will say, pay 135*l.* a year, and if I produce 1,500*l.* worth of produce that would be paying my assessment of 135*l.*; but a person takes a shop, and he turns perhaps as much over in a week as I turn over in a year, and yet I have to pay the same as he. I think the assessment should be more upon the annual production of the soil than upon the annual rent of the soil.

12,848. Do you think it would be fair that the poor rate on the land should be reduced proportionately the same as the sanitary rate?—My opinion of adjustment is that the proportion between house property and other property outside land and land should be more in favour of the land.

12,849. In the same way that your sanitary rate is?—That is so.

12,850. You would not propose to alter the law of assessment?—I do not think I should.

12,851. But to charge a lower rate to the land?—I would create a greater disparity between the one and the other.

12,852. In the same way as you have got a precedent in the sanitary rate?—Just so.

12,853. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Could you give us the proportion of arable land in the union which you represent?—I could not exactly; it would be mere guess work.

12,854. Give us a rough estimate of arable and pasture?—As between arable and pasture I should say about half.

12,855. In this recent depression upon whom has the burden fallen most heavily, upon the landlord or the tenant?—The tenant.

Reduction of rent and value of produce.

12,856. When did the reduction of rent begin?—About 18 months ago with us.

12,857. When did the reduction in the value of produce begin?—About four or five years ago. As I say four years ago I was buying hay at from 2*l.* to 50*s.* a ton delivered.

12,858. What is the proportionate depreciation in the value of produce as compared with five years ago? Give us a general estimate?—I should say 30 per cent.

12,859. How much do you say rents have been abated?—Rents have been temporarily abated upon three estates, in some instances five, in some seven and a half, and in some ten per cent. but that has not been general, nor have all the tenants of those estates received abatements. On another estate, the Wrightington estate, there has been practically a general permanent reduction equal to 25 per cent. If that could be made legal that would be a good thing but unfortunately the landlord is a very old man, he has no family, and even the tenants there, though they have got a permanent reduction, do not know what may happen to them any year because there may be another man come on who does not know Joseph and very likely will not.

12,860. So the price of produce has gone down 30 per cent. whereas rents have depreciated from about five to ten per cent. on an average?—Yes, ten per cent. is the highest except on this particular estate, the Wrightington.

12,861. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) How far back do you compare the prices when you say they have been lowered 30 per cent.?—This last six years.

12,862. Does that apply to corn, or grain, or cattle?—Cattle as far as fat stock are concerned have been going down for some considerable time. I would not speak to corn because I was not a corn grower six years ago, but potatoes and turnips, and hay and straw (except this last year, when we have had a very good year for hay) have largely depreciated.

12,863. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do you say that on the produce raised in your district there has been an average fall, taking the whole together, of 30 per cent.?—I do.

12,864. After taking into consideration the rise in the hay and the straw?—Yes; this is the first year that there has been the rise at all.

12,865. That includes very little wheat, does it?—We are practically going out of wheat growing altogether.

12,866. (*Mr. Lambert.*) I understood you to say just now that landlords, owing to heavy charges on the farms, were not in a position to give a reduction of rent?—I believe that is so.

12,867. So even though they would, these heavy charges militate against a reduction?—If they would they could not, and I am not sure that some of them would if they could.

12,868. But some, perhaps would, if they could?—I believe that may be so.

Restrictions in agreements.

12,869. The restrictions are not adhered to, although in some cases they are stipulated, and would be rather detrimental to the tenants' interest?—I think so.

12,870. But although these restrictions are not adhered to, they may be adhered to at the option of the landlord?—At any moment.

12,871. You hold your own farm upon a yearly tenancy?—I do.

12,872. Are you liable to be turned out at the end of a year?—At the end of the year.

12,873. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) With 12 months' notice, of course?—Yes, at the end of any year.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

12,874. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Then I presume you would not be able to claim compensation for the improvements you have executed upon your estate?—Except under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

Compensation

12,875. What do you think would be the result were you to claim for those?—The result would possibly be that I should have a bigger claim against me.

12,876. How much do you consider that you have improved that farm?—I say at that farm I have been spending 100*l.* a year for these last three years.

12,877. (*Chairman.*) What on?—Lime and manures. I have consumed all my own produce, and I have spent 300*l.* a year in provender, besides the manures I purchased.

Drainage.

12,878. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Do you think if the tenants were paid for draining the land at the end of the tenancy they would perform the drainage themselves?—That would a great deal depend upon what they were going to be paid for at the end of the tenancy.

12,879. The increased letting value of the holding?—Yes, I do not think many of them would object.

Labour.

12,880. The price of the labour, you say, is 21*s.* a week. Do you find that men who are paid those wages have a tendency to gravitate towards the towns or to other employments?—They are practically mostly in the town.

12,881. They are?—Yes; they come out of the town to their work.

Land Courts.

12,882. I understand you would constitute your Land Court of an official valuer, who would be a legal gentleman?—Yes.

12,883. And two practical men?—Yes.

The fixing of rent.

12,884. By whom would they be paid?—I should have them paid out of the Consolidated Fund, I think, like the judges, and let the fees go to the reduction of the amount. That would be my method. Just as you pay assessors for nautical business. You have a judge to assess in Admiralty cases, but you have two captains or two nautical assessors, and they are paid, I believe, out of the Consolidated Fund, but the legal fees are paid into the Consolidated Fund. I think that would be fair with regard to farming.

12,885. When a tenant went into a farm you would at once bring this Land Court into operation, or allow the tenant and the landlord at their mutual option to fix the rent?—I should have the state of the farm, when the tenant went on properly, described and recorded in the Land Court. With the conditions of the tenancy the landlord and the tenant could agree, but let them be recorded, and there must be a recognised basis from which the improvements could be calculated.

12,886. I want to know how the rent would be fixed in the first five years?—The rent would be fixed by mutual arrangement between the landlord and the tenant, but the condition of the farm must be ascertained and recorded.

12,887. (*Chairman.*) Then the Land Court is not to be called in only after the first five years; is that so?—If I was taking a farm from the landlord, we should agree about the rent, and then having agreed about the rent, we should have the rent recorded. We should also have the state and value of the farm recorded in the Land Court as the basis for calculation of either depreciation or appreciation at the end of each five years.

12,888. (*Mr. Lambert.*) At the end of the five years, if the rent were fixed by the Land Court, upon the application of either the landlord or the tenant, presuming the tenant did not agree to that valuation and refused to pay it, what would be the result?—That he did not agree?

12,889. Yes, if he refused to pay it?—He could leave the farm.

12,890. Then presuming that the landlord did not agree to take the valuation of the Land Court, what would be his remedy?—He would have no remedy; he would have to agree. The thing would be settled as a fair thing as between man and man. The other man goes on, but if he does not agree to what the Court believes to be fair, then he goes off.

12,891. Presuming that the landlord did not agree to the rent of the Land Court, would you allow him to determine the tenancy by charging compensation to the tenant?—No, certainly not.

12,892. I meant compensation for disturbance?—No, I would not have the man disturbed.

Free sale of improvements.

12,893. You advocate the free sale of improvements?—Yes.

12,894. Would the valuation of the Land Court be equivalent to that?—Yes.

Wigan market.

12,895. Going to another subject altogether, you pay something like 3,000*l.* a year in tolls to the Wigan Market?—More than that. After providing for the sinking fund of the market they generally have about 2,000*l.* a year to spare for the rates.

12,896. So that is somewhat of a tax upon the agriculturists of the community?—It is.

12,897. You have no complaint as regards railway rates, I presume?—There is very little produce sent; we consume practically all our own, and a bit beside.

Particulars of witness's farm.

12,898. What are the commodities that you mostly cultivate?—I cultivate general produce in the shape of oats, turnips, and potatoes, and I grow my own hay. There are other farmers further out who have orchards and who also cultivate cabbages and general vegetables.

12,899. Do you keep any cows?—Yes, I keep 25.

12,900. Then you depend a good deal upon dairy produce?—I depend upon selling all my milk; mine is milk.

The marking of foreign meat.

12,901. In your evidence just now you said that some butchers' shops sold only foreign meat?—That is so.

12,902. And that they had a larger sale than those who sold home-grown meat?—Yes.

12,903. For what reason is that; is that because the foreign meat is superior?—It is cheaper.

12,904. It is cheaper?—It is cheaper a bit.

12,905. According to that, presuming that all foreign meat were sold as such, and sold cheaper, then foreign meat would have a greater sale than even home-grown meat?—I think the home-grown meat would hold its own in many localities. The working classes are not very particular whether they get home-grown meat or whether they get foreign meat if they get it at a price, but there are a large number of people who would be quite prepared to pay even a differential price in favour of home-grown meat if they knew that they could always get it.

12,906. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Of the best quality?—Yes, or even what I should call of a middle class quality. I do know butchers who kill say a beast or two of their own and then buy three or four from Birkenhead and then call it all English meat. That is to the detriment of our trade and to the detriment of the purchaser.

Arrears of rent.

12,907. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Do you know many farms that are in arrears?—Yes, I do.

12,908. What do arrears mean?—Arrears mean that they are half a year behind in rent.

12,909. I know, but is it through paying or agreeing to pay too much rent that they are in arrears?—It is because the rent has been too much. The rent might not have been too much say in 1874 or 1875, because then, taking butter for instance, it was 2*s.* a lb., but today it is 1*s.* 4*d.* or 1*s.* 5*d.*; it is because their rates and their expenses have been gradually going up.

12,910. And the rents have not been reduced quickly enough?—There has been nothing done at all practically in the shape of reducing the rent until these last 18 months.

Improvements.

12,911. (*Mr. Channing.*) What is your idea as to making what you would call first-class improvements? Do you contemplate their being made by the tenant or by the landlord?—So far as I am concerned it would not matter which if the security was given to the tenant.

12,912. Would you give the tenant the right of enforcing the carrying out of improvements if they added to the agricultural value of the holding?—I should say that in the case of the tenant requiring some first class improvements and the landlord disputing either the necessity of the improvement or its great cost, that it should be a matter to be referred to the Land Court.

12,913. Then you think that the tenant should have the right to say what the equipment of his farm should be and to have that question referred to the Land Court if necessary?—He should have the right to make the demand.

Drainage.

12,914. You said about drainage that that ought to be an essential part of the farm?—I think so.

12,915. Would you extend that remark to any other improvements?—Not to all other improvements.

12,916. You said that no interest ought to be paid, I think, on drainage?—Not on that.

12,917. Because it is an essential part?—I think that that is essentially a landlord's provision. The remark I made was that I was as much entitled to have the water taken from under my feet on the farm as to have the water kept off my head in the house.

12,918. You would not extend that remark to any of the buildings, for instance to equipment for dairy work or things of that kind?—The necessary buildings for carrying on the farm I think the landlord ought to provide.

12,919. But you would allow some consideration for them in the rent I suppose?—Certainly.

12,920. But not for drainage?—Not for drainage.

Free sale of improvements.

12,921. Then as to free sale, would you regard that as the best practical measure of what the compensation for the improvements should be?—I think so.

12,922. In your theory of what would happen supposing you parted with your own farm you would claim as I understand the full value of your improvements?—Some of those improvements of course manurially will exhaust themselves. I should say that a person taking my farm would say "Now your rent is "so much; I can see that if the farm had to be taken to-"day it is worth so much more, so I will pay you, taking "your farm at its present rent, what I consider or what "we agree is the improved value."

12,923. That is just it; do you not consider that the tenant is entitled to the total value he has added to the farm?—I do.

12,924. The increased fertility of the farm?—I do.

12,925. In addition to a mere proportion for a year or two of the outlay on manures, cake, and so on?—I do.

12,926. Then supposing your successor pays you that full value, how is his rent to be fixed?—His rent would be my rent to begin with.

12,927. Is the rent to be increased on your rent?—It would be continuous. My permanent rent would be his rent. If he kept the farm up to its present fertility he would then be able to ask for the same consideration when he left.

12,928. You would make it impossible for the landlord to raise the rent?—Decidedly; if he did he would be raising it upon my improvements and upon the other man's purchase.

12,929. And so the incoming tenant would have to pay the landlord for your improvements as well as paying yourself?—Decidedly, as well as buying them.

Fair rent.

12,930. I understood your definition of a fair rent to be this, the balance of the gross produce of the farm after the outlay and after a reasonable profit had been paid to the farmer; is that it?—That is as near as I can get to a fair definition. I recognise a very great difficulty in what you would call a fair rent.

12,931. How would you fix the profit of the farmer; would you make that a fixed amount from year to year?—The profit, in my opinion, would have to be arrived at from the books kept by the farmer.

12,932. I understood you to mean that the rent was the balance left after the outlay had been accounted for, and also after the profit for the farmer, and I am asking you whether that profit is to be fixed from year to year, or is to vary from year to year?—I think

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that the farmer having lived on the farm, the rent should come in before a set aside profit was put down.

12,933. That is the rent should be a fixed quantity?—Yes.

12,934. That is just what I wanted to clear up; your answer gave me the other impression?—No, certainly not, I did not intend that.

Fixity of tenure.

12,935. Your position is this: that if you had security of tenure, farmers could still make a living, I understood you to say?—Yes, I think so.

12,936. That would be by high farming?—That is so.

12,937. By really high farming?—And more scientific farming.

12,938. Do you think there are many men who are ready to carry that out?—I think there are many who would carry out a higher class of farming even with their present knowledge.

12,939. They would put money into their farms?—That is so, and labour.

12,940. A great many farmers have at the present time, as you know, a very small capital, that is too small a capital to undertake high farming, how would you make a bridge for them to get to the position of high farming?—I do not propose a bridge for those men. I do not see how I could make a bridge for those men.

12,941. A man may be a good farmer and yet his capital may have been whittled down by having to pay too high rents, may it not?—That may be, but I do not see how you can give that man capital.

12,942. What is your remedy for farmers in that position; there are a great number of farmers in that position; would you make them give up their holdings and take smaller holdings?—I think smaller holdings would be better for them.

Credit to farmers.

12,943. Are you prepared to give any evidence or to express any opinion as to the credit that farmers can obtain now, that is loans for their purposes; do many of them have recourse to money lenders at high interest, do you think?—I do not think that many in our neighbourhood do. Money lenders are rather held in low repute, but the provender dealers and implement dealers give rather long credits.

12,944. That leads to a certain control of the farmer by the dealer, does it not?—That is so.

12,945. He is able to dictate what sort of implements and what sort of manures the farmer buys?—Yes, that is so.

12,946. And perhaps the farmer does not do so well on that account?—The farmer does not buy so many artificial manures. A great many farmers do not know the nature of them.

12,947. They ought to?—That is exactly why I go in for education, that they should know what they are dealing with.

12,948. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) How long have you occupied this farm?—10 years.

12,949. How long have you been engaged in farming?—One way and another 15 years.

12,950. In your notes of evidence I see you say: "In 1874 the average number of sales of farms by "auction was not more than 78, while the average for "1891-93 would be nearly 200"?—Yes.

12,951. I think in answer to Mr. Dalton you said that only very few sales had taken place during the last two or three years?—I said a great many sales.

12,952. I misunderstood you, do you mean in the Union?—Purely in the Union.

12,953. In the Union of Wigan?—Yes.

Sales of farms.

12,954. How do you account for the large increase in these sales during the last two or three years?—A great many people have found that their farming was unprofitable and rather than go on until they had nothing, have cleared out with what bit they had; others have gone on and have been compelled to sell in order to discharge their liabilities, and many of them have not covered their liabilities even when they have cleared off.

12,955. Were any farms sold?—There have been some farms sold in the neighbourhood of Wigan, say within seven or eight miles.

12,956. Did any of these belong to large landowners?—None, except in the case of Sir Thomas Hesketh, who was consolidating his estates. He reclaimed, I believe it was, about 1,200 acres of land on the marsh, drained it and turned it into cultivable land and sold what I should call his outside farms in the outlying districts so as to make his estate more compact.

12,957. How did he treat his tenants when these farms were sold? Had the tenants any claim for compensation?—Not except under the Agricultural Holdings Act. I might say that the sales were rather put upon a good basis. They had three or four years to pay for them and they had free conveyance. Sir Thomas was rather liberal in his arrangements at the sale.

Field valuations.

12,958. (*Mr. Everett.*) With regard to the field valuations when farms are entered, you do not see any practical difficulties in the way of a written description of the condition of each field at entry to be kept for comparison when the tenant goes out?—There may be some little difficulty in doing that but I believe it could be overcome.

12,959. And on the whole you think it would be a good plan?—I think so.

Wigan market.

12,960. (*Mr. Elton.*) In reference to Wigan market I recollect that the Market Commission was very much against the Corporations making such a large profit as you have mentioned there, and recommended that steps should be taken for doing away with the tolls altogether?—I believe that was so.

12,961.—Of course no legislation has been proposed yet on that?—Not on that.

12,962. Would you be in favour of legislation on that line?—I should be in favour of legislation limiting the profit of the market and simply letting the tolls cover the cost.

12,963. That is practically what the recommendation of the Commission came to?—Yes, that is what I understood the Markets Commission to recommend.

12,964. Practically to abolish markets except as far as paying the necessary expenses already incurred or necessarily to be incurred?—That is so. As I said before ours is rather an exceptional market in the country. I do not suppose our tolls are higher, and I believe in many cases they are actually lower than the tolls in many markets that do not pay. But the attendance now has got to such a pitch, the contributary elements from all around have assumed now such proportions that the market is a very valuable property.

12,965. That is an exceptional tax of 2,000*l.* a year which comes out of the farmer?—Yes, that is so; it comes really out of the farmer.

12,966. Yet, notwithstanding this toll, you say the farmers sell to the consumer direct?—The market farmer puts his produce on the market and the shopkeeper comes to the market. There is no middle profit.

12,967. You do not take it to the shop door?—You do afterwards.

12,968. But you have paid the toll?—You have paid the toll. As a rule you put your horse up and pay the toll; the man goes there, he buys, and away you go with him. Perhaps you would allow me to say in addition to that that the farmer is bound to sell, say, a large proportion of his produce in smaller quantities than loads; in that case he sells direct to the consumer and never comes near the shopkeeper at all. In Wigan that is becoming now a very large business, so that the farmer really does the retail on the market up till 11 o'clock in the forenoon.

12,969. Are the shopkeepers prevented from competing with the market stalls; have they to take a license out, or anything of that sort?—No, they can go onto the market and buy, but they must not sell again except by paying toll again.

12,970. But those that have shops may sell all sorts of produce without paying for a license to the market trustees?—That is so.

12,971. You know that in some towns they have to pay for liberty of trade?—Yes, that is so.

Technical instruction.

12,972. You were telling us something about the knowledge of these people, the labourers, for instance. Do you not think that a labourer, though no doubt he cannot as a rule explain the scientific terms that you mentioned, knows a good deal about the soil and has sometimes a very minute knowledge?—I believe some of them have a very large and keen observation.

12,973. So much so that they would know the different corners of fields, and the lands on different sites

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very well?—They would be able even in one field where the soils differed to give you a fair description of the different soils without being able to account for it or to adjust it to a particular crop.

12,974. That about the particular crop is more important, but the mere names, what names they call it, is a matter of indifference, I suppose?—Yes.

12,975. The farmers you think are very ignorant?—I think they are behind time. I would not like to describe them as ignorant, but I think they are behind their business.

12,976. I understand that, but not very exceptionally so?—I think they are behind their business as compared with almost any other business we have in the kingdom, but that I do not consider their fault; their opportunities have been few.

12,977. You do not think that they would suddenly meet a difficulty by a clever device?—I do not think they would.

12,978. Like a catch crop or something of that sort?—I do not think they would generally. My experience of them is that if they fail in an early crop then they fail for that year.

12,979. They do not have a catch crop?—They have not catch crops very often and they do not know which way to look for a remedy for the failure they have undergone.

12,980. I recollect reading in an agricultural journal of a particular farmer who was taking the trap rock, I do not know whether you have got trap rock, but it was at any rate a rock with considerable manurial value, from one field where it was a foot thick, and was spreading it an inch thick over a corresponding quantity of land. Being asked why he did it, it appeared that he did not know the name of the rock but that he knew it would improve the ground. That would show more than an average knowledge of scientific farming, would it not?—Yes.

12,981. More than you would credit as a rule?—It would show keen observation, that he knew the value of it; that where it was a foot thick he knew there was too much of it, and so he put it where it was not.

12,982. In the same way you will find farmers extremely intelligent in the use of, perhaps you have not got them in your part, phosphatic marls, and phosphatic bands or chalks?—We have no marls or chalks in our neighbourhood.

12,983. What you describe as the school is rather like the Agricultural College at Cirencester, is it not? Is that the sort of thing you mean, where young men go and learn partly practically and partly theoretically?—If you assume that it was a sort of college I am afraid you would drive most farmers to think it was only for what they call the upper class. If you call it a farm school, or a farm with a school attached, where they would have to use a spade and where they would have to follow a plough, and where they would have to milk a cow in the morning and clean a horse, then they would understand something about it.

12,984. You will excuse me for mentioning it, but I thought the young farmer you were contemplating could go to almost any place, because the Consolidated Fund is to provide the capital to compensate his father in his absence?—I said the County Council might do that and that he should be partially compensated for his absence.

12,985. I was not saying anything against it. I mean to say that that is the sort of institution?—I do not know exactly how the affairs at Cirencester and Aspatria are carried on; what I can imagine is a real farm where the actual work is done by the people who are endeavouring to learn, coupled with their oral knowledge given in the laboratory.

12,986. Do you think the Board of Agriculture could do a good deal more in the way of instruction after the manner that the Agricultural Department in America does?—I think so.

12,987. By sending out special information for farmers?—I think as the farmers are now asked to give their censuses in June, or up to August, the Board of Agriculture might also communicate with the farmers any facts ascertained, and any methods that have been devised for the benefit of those. No doubt there would be some of them of service.

12,988. Therefore they should do so?—I think so; at present I do not think the Board of Agriculture have done much for us.

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12,989. A good deal of the experimental information which has been given in the country, I understand you to regard as a kind of circus business, you said, I think, that it was rather more fit for youths and children than for practical purposes?—It is only dairying, and in the shape of butter-making.

12,990. I know; I have seen the thing as well as you?—I do not consider that it has done a great deal of good.

12,991. It is an experiment that might have been done better?—I think so.

Land Tenure Bill Buildings.

12,992. About the buildings; I think Mr. Smith's Bill contemplated that the farms should be equipped, and then that the buildings should be, kept up by the tenant after that time; he told me so, in fact?—Ordinary wear and tear, such as weather work, should be exempt.

12,993. I think he said he would let the landlord off during the building if he was practically expropriated, and that the tenant, I will put it in my own language, the tenant having become a kind of owner, would look after his own buildings?—He would keep them in repair, in the shape of painting and that sort of thing.

12,994. Supposing he wanted new ones; supposing he wanted extra buildings to those already provided?—He would have, first of all, to make his demand to the landlord, and then, if that was refused, he would apply to the court.

12,995. Take it out of the rent?—I should ask the landlord to provide it, and let it be assessed to the rent.

12,996. Take it out of the rent?—I would add it to the rent if it was a necessary building that was valuable to the tenant.

Drainage.

12,997. About the drainage, I understood one part of your answer very well, I think, that the landlord when he lets a drained farm ought to let it properly drained and properly equipped?—That is so.

12,998. And that it is no excuse to say there were drains which have now broken down and caved in, or that they are so old-fashioned that they will not work?—Yes, that is so.

12,999. But then of course your answer might have been taken to go rather further than that, that he is to come in and make speculative drainage improvements every now and then, whenever he thinks he can get rid of a little water?—I do not understand speculative drainage. If water is there, draining is such a matter of fact business that it can be done, and the water drained away.

13,000. I could tell you of plenty of cases; for instance, a flat piece of land, where it is rather doubtful how to get the water away, and you dig pits hoping that the water will run from the soil; there are special ways of draining, and even they may not succeed; it is very difficult sometimes to drain a flat district?—It is very difficult.

13,001. You would not require the landlord to come and try his best, and to keep on draining?—I should require the land to be handed over to the tenant in a tillable condition.

13,002. That I understand to be in its former condition, in a reasonable condition?—In a reasonable condition, capable of being tilled.

13,003. As warranted?—Warranted.

13,004. As what it pretends to be?—Yes, decidedly.

13,005. And that he has got to come in and keep it improved, according to the latest theories?—If the drains exhausted themselves, then I should say it is his business to replace them.

13,006. That is quite reasonable; I understand that. Suppose a person took a bit of that marshy land you spoke of, Sir Thomas Hesketh's land, of course you would not say that that contract to take a bit of marshy land *qua* marsh involved the duty on the part of Sir Thomas Hesketh to come and take it, and make it valuable dry land?—That is, I believe, one of the most exceptional takes that a man would ever go into. The whole thing is practically one of development from marshy land to agricultural land.

13,007. To save time I took that extreme sample, because it carries the whole argument, of course. I could lead you step, by step, up to that example. I understand it would be reasonable, in your view, that a man, when he lets a tillable farm, presumed to be drained, should see that the drains were in good order?—That is so.

13,008. And that you do not press on that point about the landlord finding out what further improvement could be made from time to time?—I do not.

13,009. You appear to have rather an exceptional holding, because you have practically got the whole to do what you like with, when you have once taken it?—I have.

13,010. You took it as you might have taken a house?—Practically everything is ruled out after the rent is paid to the end of the term.

13,011. Would you like to see other people like that?—I would like to see my neighbours on as good a footing as I am.

Right of landowners to inspect property.

13,012. Of course it is a very exceptional one at present. You rather regarded the landlord, I thought, except he came on specified business, as an intruder in the land he let for agricultural purposes?—I should never look upon my landlord as an intruder when going over my farm in any way.

13,013. I do not mean going over the buildings?—No, but looking about, walking about.

13,014. Walking about picking brambleberries and blackberries?—He can do just what he likes in that respect; if he has nothing better to do he can do that.

Transference of ownership.

13,015. You understand what I mean, there is such a thing as letting for agricultural purposes with various licences reserved, fragments of ownership reserved?—Yes.

13,016. But there are lettings, like house lettings, which practically transfer the ownership for a time?—Yes.

13,017. I do not want to press anything about the Bill, but do you think that when the landlord had been put upon this new kind of terms, and he is only to have the chance of the tenancy being continued at the same rent every five years, that really the subject of the rent charge, the freehold, will have passed practically to the tenant?—To a certain extent it would.

13,018. So that you think a little profit might still be made out of the land by giving what is practically the freehold to the agriculturalist?—That is really fixity of tenure. I do not think a profit could be made. I believe there are men to-day in our neighbourhood who are making a profit out of land, out of farming.

13,019. And of course you can improve their position by practically transferring the ownership, less this variable rent charge, from the landlord to them?—Yes, that is as good a definition as I can have.

13,020. When I said freehold, I did not mean to be very technical, but I meant the beneficial ownership?—Just so; I understood the question.

13,021. If I had wanted to be very technical I should have said you were trying to create a new kind of copyhold, but perhaps you would not agree with me?—I understood the limit of the term freehold as expressed.

Profits from farming.

13,022. (*Chairman.*) You say that there are men who make a profit in your district?—I believe so.

13,023. Are you one of them?—Yes.

13,024. You are?—Yes.

13,025. Has it been by carrying on their farms in a particular manner, or by greater industry?—It has been by what I call high farming, and by special scientific feeding of cattle.

13,026. But other cases than your own; have they had the same facilities that you have had of doing what you like with the land?—Many of them have not the same facilities that I have; there are others who own their own farms who, I believe, make them pay to-day, and who are practically banking their money.

13,027. Has it generally been by dairy farming?—It is mixed.

13,028. Portions of the land arable?—Yes.

13,029. In spite of the low prices they have been able to make a profit?—That is so at present.

13,030. Do you think the number of those who make profits might be considerably increased if farmers were sufficiently instructed?—I certainly do. If I could go out of my own district, I could mention a farm where the accounts are actually published—that is in connexion with the Imbecile Institution at Lancaster. I have been up there. No person who knows anything about agriculture can pass by the farm attached to that institution without being struck with the great difference of farming. The gentleman, who is in charge of that farm, publishes an account every year, I believe, and he has never failed to show a profit upon that farm.

13,031. Is he a tenant?—It is the freehold of the Institution. He has full limit to farm as high as he can.

13,032. (*Mr. Everett.*) Does he charge anything for labour?—All the labour is charged.

13,033. (*Chairman.*) Is he the owner or the tenant?—He is simply the manager of the farm.

13,034, Could you get us his accounts?—I cannot; but I believe Mr. Smith would have no difficulty in obtaining a balance sheet from him.

13,035. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Have you looked into his labour bill to see the rates at which labour is charged?—I have not; not critically.

13,036. The reason I ask is that most of our asylums and other places show a very large profit on the working of the farm, but the labour, which they get really almost for nothing, at a very low rate, enables them to bring out a very different result to that which they would otherwise have to bring out; but you do not know about that?—No, I do not know, but I believe that that question of labour has been very closely gone into.

The letting of farms.

13,037. (*Chairman.*) Is there any difficulty in finding tenants for farms in your district?—We have had in these last two years more farms to let than I have ever known in my district.

Reduction of rent.

13,038. Have they been let?—Many of them are now let at considerable reductions in rent.

13,039. What have the reductions been?—From 20 up to 25 per cent.

13,040. Are they larger reductions than have been conceded to tenants already in possession?—The highest reductions that I can find that have been made to sitting tenants, and those only temporary, are 10 per cent.

Land Courts; position of landlords and tenants.

13,041. Your proposal is that there should be freedom of contract between landlord and tenant on the first commencement of the tenancy?—That is so.

13,042. But that at the end of five years the rent should be subject to the revision of the court?—That is so.

13,043. In the interval of five years is the tenant to be allowed to give up his holding?—If he cares to, yes.

13,044. Is the landlord to be allowed to get rid of his tenant if he thinks him a bad one within that 5 years?—I should say that the landlord should not be allowed to get rid of him until the man had appealed to the court if the landlord wants to get rid of him in the five years.

13,045. I mean pending the five years; it is only at the end of the five years, I understand you, that the tenant is to be entitled to go into court?—Yes.

13,046. Before that five years has expired, is the landlord to be entitled to get rid of the tenant if he thinks him a bad one?—Not without going to the court.

13,047. Not without going to the court?—No.

13,048. I only want to understand what your proposal is. Does it mean this: that a landlord is not to be allowed to let his land, except upon the terms that the tenant is to be there if he likes for ever?—That is so.

13,049. But there is a freedom of contract for the first five years as to rent?—Yes.

13,050. But not as to the continuation of the tenancy?—Not as to the continuation.

Transference of ownership.

13,051. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I think I understood you to say just now that the transfer of the freehold of the farm, in your opinion, would enable agriculture to be carried on at a profit?—I think that people would invest more in it and that it would become profitable.

13,052. Was that statement limited to your own district?—To my own district. I do not profess a knowledge of anything out of my own district.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. William Dobson called and examined.

13,053. (*Chairman.*) Are you a tenant farmer in Cumberland?—Yes.

13,054. I believe you are a representative of the Cumberland Farmers' Association and Chairman of the Technical Education Committee of the County Council of that county?—Yes.

13,055. Have you been asked to come here by the Cumberland Farmers' Association?—Yes, they wished that I should come.

13,056. On what subjects have they particularly asked you to give evidence?—They did not instruct me in anything specially.

Condition of agriculture.

13,057. What is the condition of agriculture in your district?—It is very much worse now than it was in the seventies.

13,058. On account of the low prices?—On account of the great fall in prices.

Reduction of rent.

13,059. Have rents been reduced?—Of course they are less than they were in the seventies.

13,060. How much have they been reduced?—Varying amounts. Those that were relet in the early seventies at rents based upon the high prices then have since fallen from what they were increased to then by 30 or 40 per cent.

13,061. They were increased in the early seventies and now they have been reduced again by 40 per cent.?—Yes.

13,062. How much were they increased in the early seventies?—The same.

13,063. Then the rent must have gone back to what they were before the prosperous times of the early seventies?—That is so.

13,064. They have not fallen below that?—No.

13,065. What is about the average present rent of land in your district?—I should think 1*l.* an acre for the tillage lands, but mine is not tillage.

13,066. And the pasturage land—grass farms?—Those that are good pasturage may be 30*s.* an acre.

13,067. Are all the farms occupied?—Yes, they are all occupied.

The letting of farms.

13,068. Was there any difficulty in finding tenants for them?—There is a certain difficulty now—more difficulty now than there was in the seventies.

13,069. When a farm falls vacant can the landlord find a tenant for it?—Yes, they are always let.

13,070. But there is not such keen competition?—No.

13,071. I suppose on that account rents have fallen again?—Yes.

Particulars of witness's farm.

13,072. What has been the effect of low prices in respect of wool? Has that been a serious item in your district?—Very serious. I ought to say that I have no tillage. It is all mountain—purely sheep farming.

13,073. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) That is not what you called pasturage just now?—No.

13,074. It is something quite distinct?—Yes.

13,075. (*Chairman.*) What is the rent of your farm?—The rent is 650*l.*

13,076. How many acres?—About 4,200.

13,077. How much of that is mountain land?—It is all mountain land.

13,078. All of it?—Yes, some of it is grouse moor and some of it mountain grass, but none of it is cultivable.

13,079. It is entirely a sheep farm then?—Entirely; I have a small proportion of cattle—cows.

Rent.

13,080. Has the rent then been decreased?—Yes, it has been decreased since the seventies.

13,081. How much was it then?—At one time it was 1,000*l.*

13,082. When was it reduced?—By several stages commencing about 1880.

13,083. When was the last reduction?—I think about 1884.

13,084. No reduction since then?—No.

13,085. Have there been abatements since then?—There have been some per-centage abatements given at times in special years.

13,086. Have you had the full benefit of the reduction of rent in your assessment?—Yes.

Rates.

13,087. For poor rates?—Certainly when it is permanent, not when it is casual.

13,088. What?—Not when it is a per-centage abatement.

13,089. How are the rates; are they about the same in the £?—No, they are increasing.

13,090. What do they increase in the £; how much?—Ordinarily about 2*s.* in the £ in a rural district, but in certain cases they are getting up to 2*s.* 6*d.* and as far as 3*s.*

13,091. What are your own?—This last year they were, I think, about 2*s.* 10*d.*

13,092. What were they in the seventies?—They would be about 2*s.* It is owing of course to the education rate having increased.

13,093. Is that the main cause?—That is the chief cause of that increase.

Price of wool.

13,094. Now will you come to the fall in the price of wool?—Yes. I have it in the form of a diagram, which I will put in, from 1860 to this year, showing the price in pence per pound each year of the two leading classes of wool that sheep farmers have, cheviot wool and black-faced wool. The same figures would apply of course to all the border counties in England and Scotland, and to mostly all the sheep farms in Scotland. The prices are those actual prices got by me and by relatives on a pretty large clip of wool. Commencing in 1860 with cheviot wool at 19*d.*, it varied as high as 2*s.* and as low as 14*d.* until 1876, the average over those years being 1*s.* 6½*d.*

13,095. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) That was up to 1876?—Yes. Then it began to fall, and since 1880 it has remained almost stationary at an average level of 9½*d.* Black-faced wool during the years from 1860 to 1876 averaged 11*d.* per lb.; during the last 13 years it has averaged 6*d.* per lb.

13,096. (*Mr. Clay.*) Was that washed wool?—Yes. I have some figures showing how it affects 1,000 sheep. The decrease in the price of cheviot wool betwixt these two ranges is 9*d.* per lb., from 18*d.* to 9*d.* That upon a 4 lbs. fleece makes 3*s.*, and of course per 1,000 sheep makes 150*l.* less. In the case of black-faced wool, which has fallen from 11½*d.* to 6*d.*, the loss of 5½*d.* upon a 4½ lbs. fleece makes 2*s.* less per fleece per year, or a loss of 100*l.* per 1,000 sheep. That is the direct loss from wool. That also affects the price of the sale of sheep. On purely sheep-breeding farms I assume the annual sale of lambs beyond those required for up keep to be 400 lambs per 1,000 stock. I take it that these lambs sell for 3*s.* less on account of the wool, which makes a depreciation of 60*l.* The draft, as we term it, of cast ewes would be 200 per 1,000 at 3*s.*, which affects their price 30*l.*; so that on a cheviot stock per 1,000 sheep I make a depreciation of 150*l.* directly from the wool, and 60*l.* and 30*l.* from lambs and ewes, or together 240*l.* In the case of black-faced sheep the direct loss of wool is 100*l.*, of lambs 40*l.*, and of ewes 20*l.*, making a total depreciation of 160*l.* per 1,000 on the black-faced sheep.

13,097. (*Chairman.*) Then, as I understand you, the low price of wool has not merely told upon the annual receipts from the flock, but also has told upon the capital value of the sheep—upon the price of the sheep?—That would be in the case of a valuation on leaving the farm, but I have not reckoned that.

13,098. You have not reckoned that?—No; only the annual sales of wools, lambs, and ewes.

13,099. But the low price of wool has affected the price of the lambs?—Yes.

13,100. Then I presume any tenant coming into a farm would have rather an advantage in coming in at a low valuation by paying less for his stock?—There would be a lessened valuation because of the lessened value of the wool. I ought to say that the sheep farmer has no such remedy as is open to other classes of farming. His ground carries only sheep; we cannot substitute any other crop; we cannot lessen the production of the crop; we cannot, as in the case of food crops grown, convert wool into any other form of produce, and we are obliged to take the price.

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13,101. Then the only remedy you have is a reduction of rent, I presume?—Yes.

13,102. And the question is whether the rents have been reduced in proportion to the fall in the value of the wool?—I think they have very largely.

13,103. Very largely?—Yes, owing to these causes.

Prospects of the wool market.

13,104. Then in that case a tenant coming in at the present time and paying less value for his stock, and a reduced rent, and having a reduced assessment for the rates, is not so badly off, I suppose?—No; the ingoing would be very much easier now. The only gleam of hope for better prices for wool that I see might be the taking off the American duty on the large quantity of this class of wool previously sent to America.

13,105. That depends upon the American Government and not upon our Government?—Yes. I might, perhaps, mention another remedy, but not a nearly probable remedy, namely, the opening of large new markets.

13,106. In this country?—No.

13,107. Where do you mean?—The foreign market—it has been mentioned before in the North—I mean in China. It is said that China is largely a country with a cold climate, that the people there are very numerous, and that in cold weather they wear only silk and cotton, and frequently have on three, four, five, or six cloaks of silk. A suggestion has been made that if woollens, which are warmer, could be introduced there there would be a very large market in the 380 millions of Chinese.

13,108. Then there is a hope in that direction in the future?—Yes, which might be a help, perhaps, through the aid of the English consuls abroad.

Rates.

13,109. Now you have come here to speak upon the incidence of local taxation on tenants and yeomen?—Yes.

13,110. What have you to say on that?—I think that each person ought to contribute according to his ability to all local charges. When the measure of ability was arrived at in the age of Elizabeth, it was fixed at the annual rent, each person paid for the real property he occupied. That might be a fair basis in those days and also the easiest attainable, but now when new forms of wealth are housed in houses and premises of much smaller relative value it has become inequitable.

13,111. You think that persons ought to be charged with rates upon their property other than land and houses which they have in their possession?—No; I should say that if this measure be tested with a standard of either capital or income it would be found that agricultural land is rated at from four to six times more according to the ability of its occupier than the capital or income of people in other professions and classes. I take the capital necessarily employed on a farm to be somewhere about six rents; therefore tenant farmers are rated on one-sixth of their total capital yearly. Each penny of additional rate is to the farmer equal to a 2*d.* income tax; to other classes it means only a farthing or a halfpenny additional income tax. In the time of Elizabeth the rate levied was for the maintenance of the destitute poor and for county bridges, since then a large number of new rates have been added one by one, and they have all been imposed on this basis because it is the first subject that offers itself for this purpose and the most easily get-at-able. I point out that Parliament has already admitted the injustice of charging certain rates on the basis of rental in the case of agricultural land. In the lighting and watching rate of 1830 land was to be charged on, I think a fourth; in the Public Health Act of 1875 the general district rate in urban districts and the special expenses rate in rural districts is also charged on one-fourth the value of agricultural land, and in the case of free libraries and museums upon one-third.

13,112. Then, I understand you think that principle ought to be extended to some other rates?—I should extend it to I think, all rates now levied by county councils and by guardians and highway boards. I might read a list of rates here, and I do not recognise any of them as being of special benefit to agriculture more than to other classes except the cattle diseases rate:—Cattle diseases, poor, highway, education, police, asylums, industrial and reformatory schools, burial boards, weights and measures, food and drugs, coroners, registration, vaccination, jury lists, rivers pollution, fish, conservancy and damages from riot.

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13,113. Then you think that all those rates should be levied upon the same principle as the rates you have just referred to?—Yes.

Land Courts.

13,114. Has your association considered at all the question of land courts for the determination of rents?—No, not for the question of rent.

13,115. Are they not in favour of that?—Not with regard to the rent. Our association and also the Chamber of Agriculture of the county are in favour of some kind of judicial tribunal to settle differences.

13,116. But is that for the determination of compensation on the termination of a tenancy?—Yes.

13,117. Not for the purpose of determining the conditions of the tenancy?—No, for all questions betwixt landlord and tenant except rent.

13,118. Except rent?—Yes. We prefer Mr. Channing's Bill, and a judicial tribunal consisting of a legal president who would be paid by the State, something like a county court judge, and practical assessors paid by a fixed scale of fees.

13,119. For the determination of all questions under the Agricultural Holdings Act in fact?—Yes.

Rates.

13,120. (*Viscount Cobham.*) If your suggestion were carried out as to the assessment of rates there would be a large deficiency to make up—how would you make that up?—Necessarily by an increase in the rate per pound, but levied on a fairer basis as betwixt different classes of the community.

13,121. On other classes of property?—Yes.

13,122. Not by an extension of the system of subsidies and subventions?—No, I think not.

13,123. I think you have been through all the subjects in your proof? Is there any other subject that you wish to mention?—I would suggest the equal division of rates betwixt owners and occupiers as recommended by Mr. Goschen in 1870, and by the Richmond Commission.

13,124. Do you attach much importance to that?—Yes, I do.

13,125. It is the case in Scotland, is it not?—It is the case in Scotland.

13,126. Have you noticed any marked advantages derived in Scotland from that system as compared with England?—I have not been much in Scotland. It must tend to make both owner and occupier more sensitive to increase of rates.

13,127. You do not want to make any alteration in the system of local management and administration in consequence of the change that you advocate?—I do not see anything that would be required in consequence, there might be a representation of ownership.

Tithe.

13,128. Have you any other point to make?—Yes. The tithe is now largely paid by the landlord. In that case the amount of tithe charged upon a farm should be deducted from the rental in order to arrive at the "gross estimated rental" of the farm. That is too seldom done, I think it is not generally known, and I think it should have been explained more fully in the Circular which the Board of Agriculture issued on this subject some time ago.

13,129. It was explained, if I remember right?—I think not. At any rate not fully. As a member of the Rural Assessment Committee and also of the County Council Rating Committee, it has come to my knowledge that in scarcely any case does the farmer obtain a deduction of the amount of the tithe-charge upon his farm from the rental when ascertaining the "gross estimated rental," and that therefore the tithe is paid both by the receiver of the tithe and by the occupier of the farm out of which it issues. Then, as a stock rearing county, Cumberland would be interested in an extension of the Merchandise Marks Act or other effectual remedy to the sale of foreign produce and of adulterated produce. With regard to agricultural education I should say that we give scholarships to the agricultural college at Aspatria.

Merchandise Marks Act.

Technical instruction.

Dairying.

13,130. You are, as you have told us, chairman of the Technical Education Committee of the County Council?—Yes.

13,131. How is the money chiefly spent in the promotion of agricultural education?—We have had for three years a migratory dairy van which has been staying a fortnight in each village, and in which the pupils practice themselves with the appliances that we furnish them with.

13,132. Has that been much appreciated?—It has been very well appreciated.

13,133. And by the classes for whom it was intended?—Farmers' daughters and farmers' sons attend as pupils.

13,134. And there is a continued demand for the dairy instruction?—Yes.

13,135. Is the money spent in any other direction?—It is spent in agricultural scholarships to the college at Aspatria, in the dairy van, in short courses of lectures by one of the permanent staff, and by scholarships to the Durham College of Science which has an agricultural department.

13,136. Have you heard of no expressions of dissatisfaction from the farmers about it?—Some of them do not attend it. They do not admit that they have anything to learn.

13,137. But you are satisfied that the money is now on the whole well spent, and that a good return is obtained from it?—We are anxious to concentrate the work into a permanent institution. We have had under consideration the taking of a fixed dairy school, and with that a farm.

13,138. An experimental farm, or a farm on which instruction could be given?—A small experimental farm formed in conjunction with a fixed dairy school, where cheese-making might be taught in addition to butter and cream cheese.

13,139. Is that likely to be carried out?—The Northumberland County Council are very anxious to join us in establishing one jointly. It has been recommended by Mr. Brooke-Hunt, the Board of Agriculture Inspector, and we shall be entertaining the matter this summer.

13,140. (*Mr. Elton.*) Is Cumberland a cheese-making county at present?—No, it is chiefly butter-making at present.

13,141. But you propose to start a new industry if possible?—We cannot very well teach cheese-making in a temporary school, staying a fortnight at each village. If we had a fixed farm we might then have better plant and undertake it if it was required.

13,142. Would you have anything in the nature of a creamery to which people would bring in milk, or would you get milk from the experimental farm itself—which is your plan?—If the experimental farm be added to the dairy school, naturally we should get it from the farm.

13,143. If necessary you would enlarge it by an enlargement of the plant?—Yes, that is so.

13,144. What class of people go to the Aspatria College?—Mostly farmers' sons; the fees are low.

13,145. Are there a good many scholarships there?—A great number given by county councils; we give a number.

13,146. They come from Westmoreland and Northumberland, I believe?—And from Northamptonshire and Norfolk.

13,147. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do you know what the fees are?—About 45*l.*

13,148. A year?—A year; they have very little amount of land themselves, but they have the advantage of seeing everything that is going on on the adjacent farms.

13,149. Does the 45*l.* a year include board, lodging, and instruction?—I think 50*l.* a year includes everything there; I think it is the only institution within the means of farmers—unlike Cirencester.

Rates.

13,150. (*Mr. Elton.*) When you were speaking about the alterations in the law of rating just now, did you recollect that the Legislature put rates on to mines some years ago?—I do remember that—on to mines and sporting together.

13,151. You did not mention it among your instances, but that would be another instance of the Legislature bringing a new class of property or an old class of property back again into the rating area; mines had not been rated for a very long time?—That is so.

13,152. They were intended to be rated in Queen Elizabeth's time, very probably; then they were rated the other day by the Mines Rating Act?—In 1874.

13,153. With a slight reduction, because people had not expected to be rated?—Yes, I think that was allowed for.

13,154. That reduction was allowed for some time to the people who had not expected to be rated; and then, as you say, the sporting rights were rated?—That is so.

Price of wool.

13,155. Now as to the price of wool; that is determined outside this country by the climate of the Antipodes, I suppose?—Yes, the supply from Australasia is so great that it controls the market.

13,156. The droughts in Australia or New Zealand make the difference in your rent and the value of your flock, do they not; the existence of drought or no drought in Australia is what determines the value of your flock?—The range of prices of English wool has not varied much at all these last 13 years.

13,157. But occasionally there have been very great droughts in New Zealand?—There have.

13,158. Great destruction of sheep?—Yes.

13,159. Did that make a great difference, to your knowledge?—No, it has not done so. You see, according to the diagram I have handed in, the prices have not varied for some years, since 1880.

13,160. I forget when the last drought was, but a few years ago?—Yes.

13,161. Do you find that the continual application of new water power in Australia makes any great difference; you know they are sinking artesian wells and watering all the valleys, and that counteracts, I suppose, the effect of the droughts?—Evidently.

13,162. It keeps things at a steady price?—Yes.

13,163. What you lose in one direction you keep on gaining in another?—Yes.

13,164. So that, practically, you would be of opinion as I suggested that it is the circumstances out there which determine the value here?—Yes, and the Argentine wool. But the variation in the Australian quantity produced has not affected the prices of home wool since 1880; it is steadily one price.

Fall in prices and the currency.

13,165. (*Mr. Everett.*) The fall in prices you consider the chief cause of agricultural trouble in your district?—Yes, entirely.

13,166. The late Sir James Graham was a large landowner in Cumberland, was he not?—That is so, and there is a large estate there yet.

13,167. The late Sir James, I mean?—Yes, the great Sir James.

13,168. Have your had your attention called to a book he wrote in 1826 pointing out the connexion between prices and an expanding or contracting currency?—I have only heard of it, not seen it.

13,169. You have not read it yourself?—No, it is referred to in his life, in the memoir.

The marking of foreign meat.

13,170. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) I understand that your association is in favour of labelling foreign meat—how do you propose to do that?—I do not think we could mark the meat itself directly, other than by putting notices at the door of the retailer or by licensing him, or having a ticket on the counter, as in the case of margarine.

13,171. Would you label the meat of foreign cattle slaughtered in England, or simply the imported dead meat?—Certainly the imported dead meat.

13,172. But what about the meat of foreign cattle slaughtered at Birkenhead?—That would not be of such great consequence as the other.

13,173. Do you think that frozen meat sent over here is sold at much less than ours?—Yes, the frozen mutton and the chilled beef, sent from abroad is sold very largely as an English production to the loss of the producer and to the hurt of the consumer.

13,174. (*Mr. Channing.*) What class of farming do you come here to represent, is it chiefly grazing?—Sheep farming on hills.

13,175. Not so much stock farming?—Sheep farmers necessarily keep some cows; a few, but they only have meadow hay, no tillage.

13,176. Do you use a large quantity of cake on your holdings?—Not much.

The Agricultural Holdings Bill, 1892. Compensation for improvements.

13,177. Still, the question of compensation is a question for the use of cake and manures, and for general improvements, and that is a question keenly felt in the district?—Yes, in Cumberland generally.

13,178. You expressed an opinion in favour of the Bill which I have introduced for the last two or three years in the House of Commons?—Yes, clearly.

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13,179. Perhaps I might ask you whether the general scheme of that Bill, or particular points of it, were favoured by your association?—I think our association, when we discussed it, approved of the Bill entirely, except that we should prefer in place of the procedure clauses, some fixed tribunal with a legal president, and practical assessors, working under a fixed scale of fees.

13,180. Are you aware that the procedure clauses in my Bill were based on an Act passed two or three years ago for Scotland to have these questions settled by a single referee?—No, I was not.

13,181. Then you were not aware of the working of it in Scotland, I suppose?—No.

13,182. You are aware, though, that the principle suggested in the Bill was that there should be a list of referees appointed by the county council, subject to the approval of the Board of Agriculture?—Yes.

13,183. And that where the parties did not agree the county court judge was to select the official referee from that list?—From that panel, yes.

13,184. But you would prefer a more judicially constituted court than that?—Yes.

13,185. Do you think that farmers would generally prefer to have a county court judge with two assessors, as has been suggested by Mr. Smith?—Yes, I think so.

13,186. Instead of having a single expert from a list specially selected by the county council and the Board of Agriculture?—I have not thought of that.

13,187. You have no opinion as to whether one process would be cheaper than the other?—No.

13,188. The main points that you approve in the Bill, I suppose, are the striking out of the words, "On quitting his holding"?—Yes; that we consider very essential.

13,189. And is it your opinion that, if those words were struck out, and a tenant was always enabled on the change of the terms of the tenancy—on the determination of the tenancy—to get a settlement for his claims, that would be a great protection to the tenant in carrying out improvements?—That would be the greatest advantage that the Bill would confer. We attach extreme importance to the words, "On quitting his holding," because if the words "On quitting his holding" were deleted from the Act, then, of course, it would be impossible to have a farm revalued, and a higher rent fixed without compensating the tenant for any improvement which might be due to him during the previous years' tenancy.

13,190. The result of introducing this amendment, which, I presume, you are aware was suggested by Sir James Caird——?—Yes.

13,191. Would be this, that without interfering with the right of the landlord to charge what he could commercially for his farm, the tenant would have the right to have all his improvements valued before the new rent was agreed upon?—Yes, that is so.

13,192. So that you get protection to the tenant without having necessarily the fixing of the fair rent by a court?—Yes, clearly.

13,193. Does your association also agree to another provision in the Bill that the tenant should have a right to claim for first-class improvements—to give notice to the landlord to carry them out, and if the landlord dissents to carry them out himself?—Yes, we agree entirely with the placing of the first Schedule along with the second.

13,194. And you would also agree with two important amendments suggested in this Bill, namely, that a tenant should be compensated for general improvements, increasing the fertility of the holding, and also for good husbandry above the usual standard in the district?—Yes, and also that liberty of notice of claim should be given within one month after the termination of the tenancy.

Claims and counter-claims.

13,195. I was going to ask you a question on that—do you attach any importance to having the claims made by the landlord and tenant at the same time or would you give the landlord his extra time to make a counter-claim as at present?—No, we think the claim should go in on the same day.

Schedules of improvements.

13,196. Have you any opinion as to the schedules?—Opinions have been expressed from two points of view by a number of witnesses to the effect that it would be best to banish the schedules of specific improvements from the Bill altogether and to give a general compensation for a general increase of fertility and a general compensation for depreciation in the fertility of the holding; would you prefer to adhere to the schedules of specific compensations or would you take the other view?—We should prefer to have the first schedule placed in the same category as the second, and both of them increased by the addition of the two additional things that you have mentioned.

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13,197. Then I understand you generally approve of keeping the schedules rather than of leaving it to be estimated by a valuer or by a court what the general improvement or the general deterioration would be—you would prefer to have that specified?—There would be a great advantage in leaving the schedules as they are, because the valuer in his award might specify for which class of improvement the compensation was awarded and then, if necessary, a further sum for general improvements beyond the items mentioned in the schedule.

13,198. There is this further advantage, is there not, that if you have a list, as you have in the schedules, of specific improvements you can divide those improvements into improvements which a tenant can claim compensation for, whether he has consent or not, and improvements which he is entitled to make and get compensation for if he gives notice to his landlord and if the court approves of them as agricultural improvements?—Yes, that is so.

13,199. You could classify them, could you not, if they were specified in separate schedules?—That would be necessary.

13,200. That would be a difficulty you think in abolishing the schedules, namely, that you would not have that power of classification?—Clearly.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

13,201. Have there been many cases under the Agricultural Holdings Act in your district?—Very few.

13,202. What has been the result of those?—It was found that the provisions were not understood because they are complicated, and the procedure is found to be expensive.

13,203. They have not been satisfactory to the farmers?—No.

13,204. Do you think the rents have been reduced to the point at which farmers can make a fair profit on their farms or not?—I think they are not quite so low just now to bring that desirable result about, having regard to what prices are.

Land Courts.

13,205-6. However, you are not in favour of fixing a fair rent by a court?—Not by a court.

13,207. You are only in favour of giving absolute security to the tenant for ——?—His improvements.

13,208. For all the improvements he can make on a farm?—Yes.

The letting of farms.

13,209. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Are there any cases in which farmers have had to leave their farms through paying excessive rent?—I have not heard of any. A great number of farms have been let.

13,210. Is there a good competition for farms?—Very fair, especially near towns.

13,211. Presuming a fairly well-cultivated farm was put up to let at, say, 150*l*. a year rent how many applicants would there be for it?—There might be seven or eight.

13,212. How are the farms let—by tender?—Some are advertised, others are not.

13,213. How is the rent fixed?—Usually the same rent is charged, or in case they are advertised the offerers offer a rent, then the owner selects which he prefers.

13,214. So you have seven or eight farmers competing against each other for a particular farm?—Yes, that does happen.

Ground game.

13,215. Do you express any opinion upon giving to the tenants the right to kill ground game upon their holdings as they please?—I think it is very needful.

13,216. That they should have the right of killing ground game as they please upon their own holdings?—In any method?

13,217. Yes?—I think they ought to have that right in the case of rabbits especially.

Technical instruction.

13,218. Now as regards agricultural education. Do you find that there is somewhat of an unwillingness on the part of farmers to partake of agricultural education?—Yes, that is so undoubtedly.

13,219. What do you find is the best method of reaching the farmers in this respect?—At present we have a lecturer on agriculture who does other work for the county council, and when times can be arranged he gives courses of six or eight lectures on definite departments of agriculture in the same village, weekly lectures.

13,220. Are those lectures well attended?—They are fairly well attended now.

13,221. Do you think they are beneficial to the farmers?—No doubt, if they are willing to take in the information given.

13,222. Do you find that the farmers are willing to attend the lectures?—Yes, they do attend them very fairly well.

13,223. Is there any other suggestion you can make as to reaching the farmers to give them a better education for further facilitating the production of produce?—I do not think so, except through the elementary schools. Our county council have inaugurated what we call teachers' classes, whereby the elementary schoolmasters have had their train fare and other expenses paid in order that they might qualify to teach the elements of agriculture in their own schools.

Railway rates.

13,224. Do you find any difficulty as regards railway rates?—Personally I do not, because what I sell does not go much by railway, but Cumberland feeders who feed a great many fat sheep and fat cattle and send them to Liverpool and Manchester do complain.

13,225. I suppose you have no specific instance of that?—No, I have not.

13,226. (*Mr. Dalton.*) In what union is your farm situated?—Brampton Union.

Rates.

13,227. You say that the rates have been increasing lately. Have they in your own union, your own parish?—Yes.

13,228. What has been the cause of that principally; which rate has gone up?—The school board rate.

13,229. But the other rates have gone down?—Yes, the poor-rate and the highway rate have gone down a little; on the other hand, there are sanitary works which have been carried out, and there is a small balance not recovered from the property benefited which is charged in the general sanitary rate.

13,230. What is the school board rate in your parish?—Last year it was 1*s.*; it averages 8*d.*

13,231. If you leave that out of account your other rates would have gone down, speaking as a whole, would they not?—Slightly.

13,232. Yours is an exceptional parish, I suppose, there are not a great number of school boards I suppose in your neighbourhood?—There are a good number now. The average school board rate may be from 4*d.* to 7*d.*; our average is 8*d.*; in special years more.

13,233. Do you regard the question of rates as mainly a question for the owner or for the occupier?—Chiefly for the occupier.

13,234. You do not think they are taken into account in fixing the rents?—No, they are not much taken into account in fixing the rents.

13,235. In reference to that 1*s.* school board rate that you spoke of, you get no reduction of rent in consequence of that coming on to the parish?—No. Rents do not decrease in consequence of increase of rates.

13,236. They do not in your district?—No.

13,237. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Your farm, I think you said, was purely a sheep farm?—With a small number of cattle—black cattle—Galloways.

13,238. It is a hill farm?—It is a hill farm; some of it is grouse moor.

The Agricultural Holdings Act. Compensation for improvements.

13,239. What are the improvements that would usually be made on a farm of that description to which the Agricultural Holdings Act would apply?—Making enclosures from the open moor, and fencing and limeing probably—making additional meadows for hay.

13,240. You do not mean buildings?—No.

13,241. Those would be the two principal improvements that you make?—Yes.

13,242. Are those the improvements to which you refer when you suggest that the words "On quitting his holding" should be left out of the Act?—I was referring more to tillage lands in that case.

13,243. Not to your own farm?—Not specially to my own farm.

13,244. What would be the improvements you would refer to in the case of hill farms?—New fencing, enclosing additional ground, breaking it up, limeing it and cultivating it. There is always a great want of enclosure of hill farms. You only have four or five little fields round the house, and we are constantly aiming to enclose more.

13,245. Do you include compensation for the use of manures or the manure that has been used, and feeding stuffs and that kind of thing, as part of the compensation which should be paid before the rent is raised; because I see a difficulty in that?—The manurial value?

13,246. I understand you to say that you want to omit the words "On quitting his holding" from the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

13,247. The effect of that, I understand, would be that the rent then could not be raised until you had been paid your claim for compensation for improvements?—Clearly that is so.

13,248. Very well; then I want to know exactly what improvements that is to include; is it to include compensation for feeding stuffs and manures that have been put upon the land?—Yes, that would be so.

13,249. Then are you not in this difficulty: is the tenant in that case to be paid his compensation for these improvements, and also at the same time to reap the full profit of them in the future—because he is going to remain the tenant?—But at a new rent.

13,250. Then the landlord is to be compensated by an increase in rent?—Yes.

13,251. Would it not be very difficult to apportion an increase in rent, which is of a permanent character, for the use of cake or manures or feeding stuffs, which have only been used for one year?—Of course the life of the improvement from cakes and manures would be very short, three years probably.

13,252. That is a practical difficulty, is it not, in the working out of such a scheme?—Clearly more so than in the case of enclosure or fencing or draining.

13,253. I can understand its being made a perfectly workable scheme in the case of improvements which are in the nature of either durable or permanent improvements, but I see a great difficulty with regard to smaller improvements?—They would be reckoned over a shorter existence.

13,254. Would you be satisfied with the application of the Bill, amended as you have described to us you desire it to be amended, to the improvements of a more permanent or more durable character?—I do not quite understand; do you mean the Act of 1883?

13,255. Yes?—No, we should not be satisfied with any amendment of the Act of 1883 short of a new Bill.

13,256. I understood you to say that what you were chiefly anxious about was that the words "On quitting his holding" in the first section of the Act should be omitted?—Yes, clearly, that we make a strong point of.

13,257. Even if they were omitted the Act itself does not satisfy you?—No, I think not; the procedure is cumbrous, and other matters are defective.

Schedules of improvements.

13,258. Then I also understand you wish the first and second Schedules in the Act to be put together?—Yes.

13,259. And practically, therefore, that these considerable improvements should be made without the consent of the landlord?—But with the consent of the land court.

13,260. With the consent of the land court?—Yes.

13,261. Then, having been made with the consent of the land court, the tenant is to be entitled to compensation for those improvements?—On conditions settled by the land court if the landlord dissents from it originally as in Mr. Channing's Bill.

13,262. I am sorry to say Mr. Channing's Bill has never reached second reading yet, and therefore I am not sufficiently acquainted with it?—But I can explain the clause, I think.

Mr. W. Dobson.

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13,263. I should be very glad to hear the explanation?—The clause is that the schedule of permanent improvements should be placed in the same part of Schedule I. as drainage in the Act of 1883, which is that notice only and not consent from the landlord is necessary. If the landlord dissents from the proposal of the tenant to execute any of the stipulated permanent improvements in that schedule, he can express his dissent in writing, but that does not dispose of the matter wholly, because the matter would be referred to the court of reference, as I prefer to call it; they would entertain the matter as to whether the proposal was one for the benefit of the holding, and they could exercise their discretion in saying that it was not a desirable improvement, whereupon the tenant would not be permitted to carry it through. They could say that it would be a permanent improvement and might be executed by the tenant on such terms as to compensation as they should award.

13,264. As the court would award?—Yes.

13,265. I see one great difficulty in the case; even supposing that it is a legitimate improvement and the tenant has to give up his farm for some reason or other, and comes down upon the landlord for a large sum as compensation for the permanent improvements, the landlord may be a very poor man and he may have no possibility of raising such a sum?—Then there is a provision to make a charge upon the holding to cover it.

13,266. Is that to take precedence of the other charges, supposing it is a case of an estate which is already charged to the full, which I am afraid is the case with a good many at present having regard to the immense fall in the value of land?—In the case of a mortgagee foreclosing it would take precedence in full.

13,267. This charge for improvements which is authorised by the land court?—Yes.

13,268. That is part of the Bill?—Yes; it would take precedence in full. There have been instances where the injustice of that has been very glaring where the mortgagee took possession of a farm greatly improved by the tenant upon it, and the tenant was not able to get compensation from his landlord nor from the mortgagee.

13,269. I speak from memory, but I am perfectly confident that that law has been altered?—It has, I think, been altered lately.

13,270. But that existing law would not apply so far as I am aware, to such a proposal as yours, to future arrangements. However, that does not interfere with your view of the difficulty or the hardship of compelling the landlord to make a payment which he really is not in a position to do?—Of course if the land court decided that the improvement was really wanted, and that the methods proposed by the tenants were suitable, they could decide upon what terms compensation could be paid.

13,271. Yes; but the position I want to put clearly before you is this: Here is a case we will say where a tenant may desire new buildings to be erected upon a farm which may possibly entail on a considerable farm an expenditure of 2,000*l.*, or possibly 3,000*l.*, and the landlord is situated in such circumstances that it is quite impossible that he can make the outlay; then I understand you to say the tenant is to go to the court, the court quite irrespective of his wishes or his circumstances is to allow this improvement to be made, the tenant subsequently gives up the farm, and then this unfortunate man is to be called upon to make a great payment in compensation, which he is absolutely powerless to do; is that not a position which arises under your proposal or which might arise?—Yes; but we think that it would be a less hurtful position to the country than that a farm should be badly equipped.

13,272. Less hurtful to the country, but at the same time it would have the effect of making the owner bankrupt?—I do not think so; his land would be of more value.

Notice of claims.

13,273. With regard to the notice of claim, is there any special object in having any notice at all either upon one side or the other?—The objection that our association feel to the present notice is that when a farm is about to be vacated naturally the tenant and the landlord enter into negotiations as to any compensation that may be due to the tenant; while those negotiations are proceeding the tenant naturally does not think of sending a formal notice to his landlord at the proper time before the expiration of the tenancy, hoping to arrive at a mutual arrangement; if those negotiations are prolonged beyond that period he then finds he cannot legally claim. That would not apply if the time were extended to one month after the termination of the holding, because then he would naturally serve the claim unless a previous arrangement had been come to.

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13,274. My question was directed to this, whether it is necessary for the purpose of settling the compensation between landlord and tenant, or the incoming tenant and the outgoing tenant, that there should be any notice at all?—No, perhaps not, if the Act did not stipulate it.

Price of sheep.

13,275. (*Mr. Clay.*) What was the highest price per sheep put upon the sheep in calculating the rent in your county?—I have heard 7*s.* 6*d.* to 9*s.*

13,276. For cheviots?—Yes.

13,277. What for black faces?—Probably 6*s.* and 5*s.* 6*d.*

13,278. May I ask what you are paying just now on your reduced rent for sheep?—650*l.* for 2,000 sheep—that is 6*s.* 6*d.*, and they are some of both black face and cheviots.

The Agricultural Holdings Bill, 1892.

13,279. Regarding the Agricultural Holdings Act as I understand from your evidence, you are in full accord with Mr. Channing's principle of simplifying it?—Yes, generally.

13,280. And making it less expensive?—Yes.

13,281. As well as putting a single official referee in place of two?—Yes.

Technical instruction.

13,282. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Do you think there is great need for improvement in agricultural education?—I think there is great need.

13,283. Should you be in favour of agricultural experimental stations in various counties as they have in America?—Yes. In Northumberland the county council there have taken plots in various districts and treated various crops with various manures, and they have published a very useful report of the result of their proceedings.

13,284. What is the acreage?—Perhaps four to six acres.

13,285. What kind of experiments?—Every sort of land and every sort of crop.

13,286. Has it been suggested by your association that the Government should establish experimental stations?—No, I do not think so—not that they should be established by the Government.

13,287. That has not been suggested?—Not by the Government.

13,288. Do you not think it desirable?—I think it desirable that the county councils should take small farms.

13,289. That the county councils should?—Yes, say as an experimental station combined with a fixed dairy school.

13,290. To take pupils do you mean, or merely to publish the results of their experiments?—I do not think we should take pupils, except dairy pupils.

13,291. Your county council send lecturers into various parts of the county?—Yes.

13,292. What are the lectures upon?—Manures and feeding stuffs.

13,293. Have you heard them?—A few.

13,294. Are they practical?—Yes, they are very good.

13,295. And calculated to do good?—Yes.

Sheep-breeding.

13,296. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Has the fall in the price of wool induced you to alter your mode of proceeding, do you sell your sheep as lambs now instead of keeping them for a clip?—Yes, we sell all our lambs as lambs; we do not keep them till they are old.

13,297. Is that recent?—At one time the wether lambs were kept till they were three or four years old, now it is not so.

13,298. And the change is chiefly owing to the drop in the price of wool?—Partly that and partly because old mutton is not now so fashionable as it was—they go in for young mutton.

13,299. What generally becomes of your lambs?—They are fed for a year or 18 months.

Mr. W. Dobson.

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Compensation for improvements.

13,300. In the neighbourhood—not by you or the breeders?—No, we cannot feed them.

13,301. (*Mr. Channing.*) I want to ask you with regard to these improvements which might be authorised after a reference whether the compensation is not to be assessed in the same way as all other compensations, that is by reference to the official referee?—Yes, that is so.

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13,302. Therefore the landlord could only pay for the value actually added to the holding?—Quite so.

13,303. If he were in an embarrassment he would have received an addition to his assets in the form of the improvement?—Yes.

13,304. And that would simply be estimated by the court?—Nothing more.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

Twenty-third Day.

Friday, 16th March 1894.

PRESENT :

The RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
WALTER HUME LONG, Esq., M.P.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
FREEMAN THOMAS, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. J. F. L. ROLLESTON called and examined.

Mr. J. F. L. Rolleston.

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13,305. (*Chairman*). You are a land agent and surveyor, and have practised for the last 25 years in that capacity?—I have.

13,306. You are a member of the Council of the Surveyor's Institution, and a surveyor to the Board of Trade?—Yes.

13,307. Do you farm largely on your own account?—I farm largely for other people, but I am also a tenant farmer on my own account.

13,308. How much do you farm for other people?—About 1,000 acres; usually about that.

13,309. And on your own account, how much do you farm?—About 100 acres on my own farm.

13,310. In what counties are your agencies?—In Leicestershire chiefly, but I have also estates in Bedford, Huntingdon, Kent, Essex, and Wilts.

13,311. Where are your headquarters?—At Leicester.

13,312. It is mainly with regard to Leicestershire, that you have come here to-day, I understand?—I was asked to come here on behalf of Leicestershire.

Depression in Leicestershire.

13,313. Will you give your opinion as to the degree of depression felt in the various districts with which you are connected?—As far as my experience goes, agricultural depression has not been nearly so much felt in Leicestershire, as in some other counties I know of, for instance. Bedfordshire and Huntingdon, and Essex. The Leicestershire farms are farms of moderate size, mostly under 200 acres, and are what are known as mixed farms. Stilton cheese is made very largely in Leicestershire. on the north and east side of the county, and the flat Leicestershire cheese on the west side. The south is a grazing district, in the neighbourhood of Market Harborough, and the north-west is a forest district.

Dairying.

13,314. It is not a wheat-growing county, then?—No, Leicestershire is not a wheat-growing county. The dairying industry is the industry that is now very largely increasing, especially in the direction of milk selling, because it is found that that is the most rapid system of converting the produce into money.

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13,315. Where do they send their milk to?—To Leeds, Newcastle, and London.

13,316. Even to London?—Chiefly to London.

13,317. Is there a continually growing demand for it or is the market now fully supplied?—I understand that notice has been given by the buyers of a very large reduction in price, and that the milk producers are rather despondent accordingly.

13,318. In the past has there been any reduction in price, or has it been maintained up to now?—The price of milk has been fairly well maintained. It has been about 1*s.* 2*d.* a barn gallon in the summer, and 1*s.* 6*d.* per barn gallon in the winter.

13,319. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Has not there been a special rise this last winter?—There has been a special rise this last winter.

13,320. And are prices likely to fall below the point at which they were before that rise?—I rather think they will, because of so many people going into the business.

13,321. (*Chairman.*) But that has not yet occurred; it is merely threatening?—It is threatening.

13,322. Is the immediate object of the threat to bring down the prices to what they were?—I am hardly able to answer that. The milk buyers have given notice of a considerable reduction, and I do not think that the price is actually settled yet.

13,323. Then with regard to cheese; is the produce still large in the county?—I think that there is less cheese made than there was, because the milk is sold in this way.

13,324. Has the price been maintained, or not?—Only of the very best cheese: the prices of the inferior sorts have gone down.

13,325. Is much of the very best cheese produced in the county?—Yes, a good deal.

Markets.

13,326. Then the whole of the county has access to good markets?—It has; there is very fair railway accommodation in all parts of it.

13,327. And the county is one famous for its fox-hunting?—Yes, it is still the metropolis of fox-hunting, and a large number of people settle in the county every winter, and that is the means of a very considerable sum of money being imported and spent in it every year.

13,328. And there is consequently a considerable demand for local products?—Yes. It is also very largely a manufacturing county, and a mineral county. Besides the large towns there are a great many large villages where local manufactures are carried on, and there are considerable deposits of coal and limestone, and there are large outcrops of granite, all of which are extensively worked.

13,329. Then there are local markets for produce of all kinds?—Except milk, which is usually sent away; and cheese also I should say.

Reductions of rent.

13,330. With these advantages what has been the experience with regard to rents?—The fall of price, which seems to have been going on for the last 15 to 20 years, has been severely felt. Rents have fallen, on an average, I should say 40 per cent., and as a rule taxation has increased.

13,331. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) That is in Leicestershire?—That is in Leicestershire, but there is no land that I know in the whole county that is out of cultivation and the proportion that is held in hand is not considerable.

Prices of dairy produce.

13,332. (*Chairman.*) When you speak of the fall of price, I gather from you that milk has not fallen, and that the best quality of cheese has not fallen?—No, it has not. The generality of the farmers do not make the best qualities of cheese and the inferior qualities have very largely fallen in price. I have known stilton cheese sold at 4*d*. and 5*d*. per pound.

13,333. The majority of farmers produce the inferior qualities of cheese only?—Yes, the county council and the agricultural societies are very active now in sending about lecturers to instruct people in the art of making better butter and better cheese.

13,334. Is much butter produced in the county?—A good deal of butter.

13,335. Has the price been maintained or has it fallen?—The price has fallen considerably.

Uncultivated land.

13,336. Is there any land out of cultivation?—I do not know of any land in Leicestershire out of cultivation.

Land in hand.

13,337. Is there much land in hand?—Very little: the amount in hand is quite inconsiderable.

Competition for farms.

13,338. Is there a demand for farms when they are vacant?—There is ample demand for farms when any are vacant but always at reduced rents.

Reductions of rent.

13,339. When you speak of reduced rents do you mean rents lower than the average rents of the farms occupied or at the reduced rents that you speak of on reductions which are conceded to all?—At still further reduced rents; we can hardly ever get the same rent from the incoming tenant as the outgoing tenant paid.

13,340. As compared with tenants in possession?—As compared with tenants in possession.

13,341. Are greater reductions conceded to incoming tenants than are conceded to the tenants in possession?—I am afraid that that is the case.

13,342. Does that give rise to the demand for further reductions from the tenants in possession?—Yes, it does.

13,343. And are they generally conceded?—They are generally conceded.

Competition for farms.

13,344. But you say there is ample demand for farms?—According to my experience whenever a farm is advertised there are always a great many applications for it.

Tenants' capital.

13,345. Are there many persons with sufficient capital to enable them to cultivate?—The majority of them are applicants with not sufficient capital to cultivate the farm for which they apply; we have to make very careful inquiries of that kind.

13,346. Still it is possible to find men with capital sufficient to enable them to cultivate?—Yes, it is in Leicestershire.

13,347. I presume any new tenant coming in, comes in at a considerable advantage?—Yes, a considerable advantage. He generally makes his own terms as to rent, and he always asks for buildings in many cases to be remodelled to suit his own peculiar style, whether rearing or dairying or anything of that kind and these requests are generally granted.

13,348. What is the average amount of capital now required for the entry upon a farm in this district?—It should be about from 6*l*. to 7*l*. per acre, but there are a great many tenants who have nothing like that.

13,349. As compared with a few years ago is not that amount reduced?—The amount of capital possessed by the tenant is considerably reduced.

13,350. But I mean in letting a farm to a new tenant will the landlord put up with a tenant of less capital than formerly on account of the reduced prices?—I think a landlord would rather than not let his farm.

13,351. You say it should be from 6*l*. to 7*l*. per acre; I presume that a a few years ago it would be rather higher?—It was.

13,352. What I wanted to get is what the reduction has been?—It was generally supposed that a man should have 10*l*. an acre on taking a farm.

13,353. Then in consequence of the reduction of prices, whereas only a few years ago 10*l*. per acre was considered the proper capital with which to enter upon a farm, now it is from 6*l*. to 7*l*. per acre?—Yes.

Arrears of rent.

13,354. Then besides the considerable reductions in rent, have there been also arrears of rent in bad years?—Yes, to a very large extent.

13,355. Did the district suffer last year from drought?—Very much so, and the class of farming suffered.

Abatements of rent.

13,356. Were there temporary abatements made in consequence?—Yes, there were.

13,357. What did they amount to?—From 15 to 25 per cent.

13,358. Beyond the reductions of rent which had been previously conceded?—Yes, beyond the amount of re-adjusted rents.

Rates.

13,359. You said that rates had advanced; have the tenants as a rule had the benefit of the reduction of rent in reduced assessments?—Yes, they have.

13,360. Then if rents had been reduced 40 per cent. the assessments would have been reduced in the same proportion?—They have been.

13,361. Has that in itself led to an increase of rates in the £?—Yes, it has.

13,362. What has been the increase of rates in the £?—I can hardly answer that; the rates have increased mainly in places that have gained in population, and where sanitary arrangements have been required.

13,363. Quite so, but those would be exceptional cases. One would like to take a case of an average rural district which has not been affected by exceptional circumstances of that kind?—I should say that in an average rural district, beyond the highway rate which has increased, there has not been an increase of taxation. The villages of Leicestershire, where all this mining and manufacturing is going on, are largely of an urban character. It is very largely a manufacturing and mineral county; and the Local Government Board has grouped whole groups of parishes to form a local board in the mining districts; and their taxation has very largely increased.

13,364. But does that fall upon the land?—Yes, it does.

13,365. I thought that they were exempted from the burden?—They have to pay the School Board, the education rate, and the lighting.

13,366. But I am speaking of the sanitary rates?—The sanitary rates are one-fourth upon land. As soon as the Local Board is created in those places under my control, I have at once complaints from the tenants of the increase in the rates, and we have to reduce their rents and make concessions in proportion.

13,367. I think you said you farm yourself about 100 acres?—Yes.

13,368. Are you a tenant farmer?—I am.

13,369. In that case has your assessment been reduced in proportion to the reduction of rent?—It has.

13,370. And in your own case do you pay a higher amount in the pound than you did?—My own is rather a peculiar case; the parish in which my land is was on the outskirts of the borough of Leicester and under the control of a rural authority. The rates were excessive, nearly 8*s*. in the pound, and the urban part of the parish has now been included in the borough of Leicester, which has left the remainder of the parish purely rural, and in consequence of that extension, which we, of course, largely supported, our rates have gone down.

13,371. What are they in the pound now?—About 3*s*.

13,372. Then, of course, your case is somewhat accidental?—It is accidental.

13,373. In your case there has been a reduction in the assessment of 40 per cent., and a reduction in the rate in the pound from 8*s*. to 3*s*.?—Yes; in my own case. We fought for many years for the extension of the boundaries, because we thought that the rates caused by the people of Leicester settling in our parish were unjust.

Condition of farmers.

13,374. Now, taking generally the condition of tenant farmers, having regard to the reductions in rent and to the reductions in their assessments, and I suppose the reduced prices that they pay for the manures and feeding stuffs, what is their position?—If I except the unfavourable season of last year, I think the position of the tenant farmers of Leicestershire is a fairly good one. I know there are cases where abatements have not been made, but certainly in all cases in my own experience, they have been made, and the tenants have made their own terms and are farming now, if prices should prove to be stable, under favourable conditions.

13,375. Then if prices are maintained at present rates, if they do not fall any further, you consider that the adjustments on the whole, on taking the average of the cases, have been made so as to enable the farmer to carry on his business?—I think if prices are stable, that the rents have been lowered proportionately. It is rather a difficult question, because prices of wheat have fallen so rapidly the last six months.

Wheat growing.

13,376. But the production of wheat is small?—It is small in Leicestershire.

13,377. I suppose not more is grown than is necessary for the straw?—Yes, for the straw; that is all.

Store stock.

13,378. Then it is not an important item?—Not in Leicestershire, but still the price of store stock is so exceedingly low.

13,379. I suppose that is due largely to the seasons, which have forced the stock into the market—there was not sufficient produce to feed the stock?—That is so; it is due, to a large extent, to that.

13,380. And that led to a great fall in prices?—Yes.

Position of landlords and tenants.

13,381. That, of course, would be an exceptional case. But omitting last year, do you consider that with the prices, which prevailed last year, considering the reductions of rent, and the reductions of rates and assessments, and so forth, the farmers could carry on their business?—I think, with the prices prevailing about 12 months ago. I ought to say that even beef has been very low; as little as 5½*d*. per pound has been realised for good first class bullocks.

13,382. But that was exceptional, I suppose, owing to the drought largely; was it not?—I suppose it was. But the tendency of prices has been downwards for the last 15 years.

13,383. With regard to the position of the landlords, what do you say?—I think the landlords are now bearing the brunt of the depression. Having reduced their rents as demanded, and having expended the money in improvements asked for as far as they have been able, they have put their tenants in a proper position. They are left with the reduced income while the charges, if any, on their estates, remain the same as before. Therefore, while it has been possible to lighten the load of the tenant, it has been impossible for the landlord to divest himself of his liabilities.

Tenure.

13,384. Has there been a change in the tenure of the farms?—They are all yearly tenancies. I do not know of a single case where a farm is held for a long term.

13,385. Were leases common before the last few years?—They were not exactly common; but farms were frequently let with leases.

13,386. But now there are none?—Now there are none. I do not know one single case.

13,387. They are all let on yearly tenancies?—Yes.

13,388. That is partly what enables the tenant to demand a reduction of rent?—He always comes in before the quarter-day, and says, "I must ask you to "take off some of my rent, or I must give you notice "to leave," so that it is entirely in the tenant's hands.

Concessions to tenants.

13,389. And they are able to get concessions?—If the tenant is a fairly good tenant, all the landlords that I know of prefer to make concessions to their sitting tenant rather than to let him go, and run the risk of having to make still greater concessions to a new tenant.

13,390. I gather from that that the landowners are prepared to make the concessions rather than incur the expense of taking a new tenant?—Certainly.

Labourers.

13,391. With regard to the labourers, what do you say?—There is no distress amongst agricultural labourers in Leicestershire, there is a great deal of employment for them in the mines and the quarries and in the large manufacturing villages.

13,392. Have the wages been maintained?—The wages of labourers have increased.

13,393. What is the average wage now?—Well, I should say for a day labourer 16*s*. per week, and for a seven day man 18*s*. per week.

13,394. From what point did they rise to that?—I should say they have risen from 15*s*. and 17*s*. to 16*s*. and 18*s*. In Bedfordshire of course they are very much lower. In Leicestershire you cannot get a good casual man for less than 18*s*. per week.

Low prices and bad seasons.

13,395. What in your opinion is the main cause of the depression?—My opinion is that the main cause of the depression is the great fall of prices which has taken place.

13,396. And to that rather than to the bad seasons you attribute the depression?—Certainly I do. We have not had an average of bad seasons, although it was a bad season last year.

13,397. Apart from last year, the seasons have been fairly good?—Fairly good; 1879 and 1880 were bad years.

13,398. Between 1879 and last year, have the seasons been rather above the average?—There have been no bad seasons during that time; they are perhaps above the average.

The currency.

13,399. Then what in your opinion is the remedy?—I think that the first thing is to find the cause of the fall of prices, and if that fall of prices can be arrested or restored, that will be the remedy for agricultural depression. I attribute the cause of the fall in prices to the monetary legislation of this country, of Germany, of the Latin Union, and of the United States, all of which countries now draw their supplies of money from one source instead of from two as before. It seems to follow that that must have caused a contraction of the volume of money; and the consequence is that its purchasing power has very greatly risen, and its command over labour and all other forms of property has increased; and now that India and the United States are competitors for gold money, it seems that it must be that prices must still further fall, and that the prospect before the agricultural classes is a very bad one.

13,400. Then you consider that the depression in the past has been due to the enhanced price of the value of gold, due to monetary causes; and with regard to the future you are alarmed in the sense that it may go still further?—Yes, I feel, and every one who has capital invested in land, I think, agrees with me, that the main cause of depression is the great fall in prices that has taken place, and I do not think that the readjustment of taxation or more favourable rates for internal traffic, or the licensing of shops for the sale of foreign meat, though all these things are most useful and beneficial, and ought under any circumstances to be seen to, but not even the whole of them put together would be in any way a remedy for agricultural depression.

13,401. They are desirable in themselves, but they would not be a remedy for the existing state of things?—None whatever, in my opinion. The great complaint in Leicestershire (although it is better than other counties), and in every other county, is, even from uninstructed people, that there is no money. If you congratulate a farmer upon the excellent way in which his stack yard looks, he says, "Oh, yes, but I cannot "get any money for it." The amount of money which farm products command is now so very small, and that applies to all products, not to farm products only.

13,402. Then, in your opinion, unless the fall of prices can be arrested there cannot be a remedy for agricultural depression?—That is my opinion.

13,403. And that fall can only be arrested by an expansion of the volume of money?—By an expansion of the volume of money which might be arrived at in various ways, by a large discovery of gold in various parts of the earth, for instance, or it might be expanded by the issue of, say, an amount of irredeemable paper, or by the re-issue of silver money as before. All those three matters would expand the volume of money.

13,404. Then assuming that no changes are made in that respect, and, in consequence, the value of gold still goes up, what do you consider will be the result?—If gold continues to rise in value the margins of debtors must run off, and there must be repudiation on the part of public debtors and bankruptcy on the part of private debtors if the appreciation of gold goes on, which there is every evidence of.

13,405. Well, what would follow, and what ought to be done?—If a large amount of gold is not found, if silver is not used again, nor paper issued, the only way would be to lessen the rate of interest very considerably on all debt; to considerably curtail the expenses of the country, to reduce all official salaries; the pay of the army and navy; the pay of the inspectors; reduce the price of postage stamps; every gold price must be reduced proportionately to the reduced price which producers are getting.

13,406. All these changes in your opinion would become necessary?—I think that would be the logical outcome of an extreme state of gold appreciation.

Wages Leicestershire.

13,407. How do you account for the fact that wages have not fallen in your district on those assumptions?—Agriculturally I account for it because our county is very largely a manufacturing county and a mining county, and we have a very great progressive town in the centre of it, Leicester, where the agricultural labourers to a large extent flock.

13,408. But that has been the case for many years past?—Yes, for many years past.

13,409. One would gather from your evidence that while the wages in these towns have been falling concurrently with the fall in prices, they have somewhat risen?—Agriculturally.

13,410. I presume that has followed from the rise of wages in the towns themselves?—Yes.

13,411. Therefore it would appear that in spite of a general fall in prices the rate of wages has been rather increasing?—Well, up to a certain point they have. The trades unions have been a very powerful influence in maintaining the rate of wages, but there has been a very considerable decrease in the amount of employment even in the large town of Leicester. I should say the average rate of wages during the last 12 months in Leicester has considerably decreased.

13,412. That is a temporary matter during the past year; but, eliminating the past year from your comparison, are we to gather that the rate of wages has somewhat increased in the towns in your district as well as in the rural districts?—I think the rate of wages had increased up to about a year ago, but now the employers are beginning to find their profits are very much cut, and in many cases have gone to a vanishing point, and so there is beginning to set in a conflict between capital and labour as to the rate of wages.

13,413. Then you think that it may be that in the future there may be a fall in the rate of wages?—There is at the present moment.

13,414. There is at the present moment?—Yes, there are a great many unemployed.

13,415. But that has not produced its effect upon the rural district?—Not upon the rural districts.

13,416. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I understand that this applies to Leicestershire?—Yes; the wages are much lower in other counties that I know, but they certainly have increased agricultural wages in Leicestershire.

13,417. (*Chairman.*) Then the farmers in your district have not been able to obtain any adjustment with respect to lower wages?—No.

13,418. On the contrary, they have had to pay rather higher wages?—Yes, the difficulty of getting good labour is a general complaint.

Sub-division of farms.

13,419. Has there been much change in the district in the way of reducing the size of farms?—The tendency is to reduce the size of farms. A large farm, if it has been found difficult to let it as a large farm, is generally cut up and let in various pieces. The difficulty of that is building further houses and farm buildings.

13,420. Apart from that difficulty would it be desirable to reduce the size of the farms?—The small farms are always the more readily let. There are always more applicants for the small than for the large farms. A farm of 120 acres is a very popular size.

13,421. I suppose the tenant works himself on such a farm?—The tenant works himself. A farm of 300 or 400 acres is very difficult to let as a whole.

Loans for expenditure on improvements.

13,422. Have the landlords much difficulty in finding capital for the increased buildings?—Yes, they have great difficulty.

13,423. Do you consider that anything could be done to assist them in that direction?—No. Except that I think that borrowing under present conditions ought to be discouraged by any class. Take, for instance, the small ownerships which are now encouraged by Act of Parliament. Under a stable standard of value, of course, the extension of those small ownerships is in every way desirable, but to tempt people by offering facilities for borrowing money into an occupation which under present conditions means certain loss, does not seem to me to be expedient or politic. I hear of it—it is not my own experience—that even potatoes are sold as low as 1*l.* per ton. Now the occupier even of an allotment can make better use of his time than growing potatoes which he can buy at 1*l.* per ton.

13,424. I presume in the case of allotments the rent would fall in proportion to the fall of other rents?—Yes, the rents of allotments have fallen.

13,425. What you are now speaking of is rather the case of the small holdings formed for the creation of small ownerships under the Small Holdings Act?—Yes, in the first instance I spoke as to that.

13,426. Where the new purchaser would have to pay a fixed sum for the next 45 years, including interest and instalments of the debt?—Yes.

13,427. I gathered that you think that unless prices are likely to be stable we shall be inviting persons to go into a poor transaction?—To undertake, under circumstances of which the essence is borrowing money, or, in other words, contracting to deliver gold at a future date, that which is no longer legitimate business, but which is on the other hand a dangerous speculation.

13,428. That is based on your idea that the prices will continue to fall, but that we have not yet reached the bottom of the difficulty?—Quite so. I have some proof of what I was saying as to the fall of prices in the city article of the *Times* on the 23rd of last month. It reports that from an index number made up this month, wholesale prices appear to be quite the lowest ever known. There are three records reported to be broken in that article in the space of a very few lines; the largest bank balance ever published, the highest prices of converted Consols ever reached, and the lowest range of wholesale prices ever known.

13,429. Have the landowners, in your experience, been able to borrow money on rather better terms of late or not?—It is usually borrowed from Lands Improvements Companies. There has been no alteration at present in their terms.

Interest on mortgages.

13,430. But taking mortgages generally?—Where there have been a variety of mortgages on an estate they have been very often consolidated at a lower interest if the security was ample.

13,431. And you say, generally, that landowners have been able to reduce the interest of their mortgages?—On the large mortgages, I think so.

13,432. How much reduction has been made, about ½ per cent.?—Yes, from 4 to 3½ per cent.; but on the

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smaller sums invested in that way the owners of the mortgages are very reluctant to reduce the interest.

Appreciation of gold.

13,433. Generally we may take it from your evidence that we have not yet reached the end of the difficulties, and that the same causes which have operated of late years in the direction of enhancement of gold values will continue in the future, and you foresee greater difficulties to come?—I do.

13,434. And that the adjustment will be more difficult as the prices continue to fall?—Quite so.

Technical instruction in dairying.

13,435. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Has the county council succeeded in improving the quality of the cheese made in Leicestershire?—I think it has in a great many cases. You hear various opinions about it. Some, of course, of the best farmers who have made it all their lives rather resent the lecturers coming into their neighbourhoods and teaching them to conduct their business; but I think amongst the smaller and more inexperienced class of dairymen the county council have done a great deal of good; I understand that the improvement is very marked amongst the small farmers.

13,436. The classes are well attended, and they have profited by them?—Yes, and they have listened with great interest to the lectures.

Experimental or model farms.

13,437. Should you be in favour of the establishment of a model farm or model farms in the county?—I think that anything involving a considerable expenditure of money is not desirable just now.

13,438. I mean out of the technical education grant, instead of sending lecturers about, would you centralise the instruction?—Yes, I think I am in favour of that. There is a proposal of the kind in our county at the present time to join with one or two neighbouring counties and found an institute for the purpose of instruction, but then that would only accommodate 30 students from Leicestershire.

13,439. Would you make it an experimental farm as well?—Yes, an experimental farm.

Foreign competition.

13,440. Would you give a little more explanation of your reason for thinking that foreign competition has had nothing to do with the present depression?—I find that there is a considerable agricultural depression in the United States of America, in France and Germany, all of which countries have very high protective duties. In France the duty on wheat is from 13*s.* to 14*s.* per quarter, and in the United States beef and wheat have fallen very largely in price.

13,441. It does not prevent them from sending large supplies over to England?—I understand that the area under wheat is decreasing in the United States because of the low price. I read what Sir Albert Rollit said in the House of Commons the other night that there were four million acres less under wheat cultivation in America last year than in the year before.

13,442. Then it is reasonable to suppose that the competition from America will decrease?—Yes.

13,443. Will not that have a tendency to raise the prices here?—I think it is the eastern wheat that sets the price, the wheat that comes from India and Russia. I think that the value of the rupee has a great deal to do with the price of wheat.

13,444. You think that even if the United States supply ceases that we shall be still exposed to the same amount of competition?—I think so, the Indian purchaser is getting, even at the low price of wheat, the same amount of money that he did before. He is not losing anything at present.

13,445. Supposing the prices increase here should not we be exposed to a more keen competition?—If it substantially increases, probably.

13,446. Do you consider that competition has a tendency to depress prices?—If there is a very great production of any commodity the price must be lower than when there is a small production.

13,447. Foreign competition then has not had anything to do with it?—I think there is absolute proof that it has not, because there is as much agricultural depression in countries which have high protective duties. If high protective duties were a remedy, why then is there agricultural depression in countries which have those duties?

Technical instruction in dairying.

13,448. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Is the cheese you speak of produced largely by small or large farmers?—Small farmers.

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13,449. Would there be a large demand for cheese if it were better made?—Yes, there would; the best qualities are always readily sold. It is the inferior qualities that there is a difficulty in getting rid of.

13,450. And therefore there is a good deal of ignorance as to the mode of making cheese?—Yes.

13,451. But which is now being improved by the Technical Education Committee?—Yes, I think they have done a great deal of good in that way.

13,452. They have equipped a laboratory dairy, have they not?—Yes, and an itinerant lecturer who has all his appliances with him, and who illustrates his lectures by churning butter, and all that sort of thing.

13,453. You think that that has proved a benefit to the small farmers?—Yes.

Price of milk.

13,454. With regard to the price of milk, lately, you suggest that it is not likely to be maintained?—I am not a milk-seller myself, but I am told that there is in sight a considerable fall in the price of milk.

13,455. As a fact it has been increased since last year?—The price of milk increased last winter.

13,456. That would be, probably, owing to the drought?—Yes, and the short supply.

Railway rates on milk.

13,457. Do not railway rates affect milk-sellers very much?—Very much.

13,458-9. Do you suggest that they should be reduced?—Yes, I do. I do not think that the extra rate should be put on.

Prices.

13,460. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Have the prices of other commodities fallen as much as the prices of agricultural produce?—Yes, I should say they have.

13,461. Have you looked specially into that point?—Land, house property, and every other commodity with which I have had to deal, has considerably fallen in price.

13,462. The question I am putting is whether there is a greater fall in leading articles of agricultural produce than there is in wholesale articles in other commodities?—I cannot say.

13,463. You have not looked into that?—No, I have not.

13,464. Supposing you were to have a rise of price, not merely in agricultural produce, but in other things would that be a state of things that you would anticipate a rise in agricultural prices?—I think it would.

13,465. The prices all round?—All round.

13,466. Do you think that it is likely that there would be a rise of prices without a rise of money wages as well?—No, I think there would be a rise in wages, and fuller employment.

13,467. There would be a rise in money wages?—Yes.

13,468. And the effect of that would be, would it not, that along with the rise in agricultural prices the agriculturist would have to pay more for everything that they purchased, and more wages, would he be so much better off than now, if you had a rise of prices of that kind?—In theory perhaps not, but in practice yes. I never find anybody who is in favour of low prices.

13,469. That is to say, that people in the market always like the rising market?—Yes.

13,470. But is that a possibility?—It ought not to be a constantly falling market.

13,471. But is it conceivable or possible that you could have a constantly rising market?—Not for ever rising.

13,472. There must always be fluctuations?—There must always be slight fluctuations, but even stability could be arrived at with fluctuations.

Currency and fluctuations in prices.

13,473. Are there not always considerable fluctuations owing to the changes in the state of credit at different times?—Is not the state of credit influenced by the monetary causes to which I have referred?

13,474. But is it not the case that if you go back a long period, you find periods of years in which prices are rising, and periods of years in which prices are falling—that you have really always changes of prices going on?—Yes, that is the case.

13,475. If the prosperity of agriculture is dependent upon the condition which, as a permanency, is certainly impossible, what then?—It is not impossible to prevent prices from perpetually falling.

13,476. But I am asking, if the prosperity of agriculture is dependent upon a condition of things which is impossible?—No, it is not impossible.

13,477. You cannot have a constantly rising market, and therefore you cannot have the condition of things which you believe most favourable to the prosperity of Agriculture?—You can have stable prices.

13,478. Can you?—I believe that prices in India, for instance, during the time that there have been various fluctuations in Western Europe, have been comparatively stable.

13,479. That is, that over a good period of time, you find that prices in India of silver have been more stable than prices in European gold?—Yes.

13,480. But can you say that that stability of prices is a thing to be expected permanently in India or anywhere else?—If there is to be any change of prices it should be in the direction of a gentle rise.

13,481. But I have just been getting an admission from you that a gentle rise, as a permanent condition of things, is an impossibility; it is not conceivable?—That of course is an argument that prices should not be for ever expected to rise.

13,482. If they cannot for ever be expected to rise how can that be put forward as a condition of the experiment on any trade including agriculture?—I say that prices can be expected to remain stable.

13,483. Is that really so; have you looked into the history of prices; is there any record of stability for any very long period?—There have been great fluctuations; never so great a fall I understand as to-day.

Fall in prices.

13,484. I do not wish to go into controversy upon that point, but are you quite sure that there has never been so great a fall as within the last 20 years?—I am informed from statistics I have looked up, that prices are lower than they have ever been; wholesale prices.

13,485. How long have these conditions been in existence to test them?—I am informed that prices are lower now than in the bad times from 1840 to 1850.

13,486. That is to say, that in a certain given period they are lower now than at the beginning of that period?—Yes.

13,487. But that does not meet the question whether you have not fluctuations of prices equally with what you have had?—As far as I have been able to learn I do not think there has been any such protracted fall of prices as we have experienced during the last 20 years.

13,488. Have you looked at the period between 1815 and 1840?—Yes, I have read about it.

13,489. And would you say that, after considering that period?—Yes, I think I would.

13,490. But you are not prepared to go into the question at the present time?—I am not prepared to go into the period between 1815 and 1840, but I am familiar with the history of that time.

13,491. But still, when you say that the fall of prices of recent years, the last 20 years, is quite unprecedented, is not that a general statement that ought to be very fairly considered?—Yes, certainly.

13,492. And assuming that you have had very considerable falls in prices in former times extending over long periods, can you say that although the recent fluctuation has been somewhat greater in degree that that is such an unusual state of things in business?—For instance, I do not think if you take the period since the 15th or 16th century that wheat has been so low as to-day.

Currency and fluctuations in prices.

13,493. It might be with many articles that after fluctuation you get a different point in prices to what you are speaking of now as fluctuations over a considerable period which are the things which affected the industry for the moment?—There was a very considerable fluctuation in prices in the period you referred to when the irredeemable paper was taken in.

13,494. You admit considerable fluctuations in prices before the recent 20 years?—Yes; attributable usually to alterations in monetary laws.

13,495. But not alterations in monetary laws of the kind that you describe now?—Whenever contraction has taken place there has been a fall of prices; whenever expansion has taken place there has been a rise in prices.

13,496. Still is it not the case that along with a state of things such as you would not desire to arrive at again—that is, the contraction of gold and silver money, the standard money—you had a considerable fall in prices and fluctuations in prices?—I scarcely understand your question.

13,497. You are suggesting that a certain amount of monetary contraction has taken place this last 20 years and has produced an unprecedented fall in prices, and I am asking you if the period to which I have referred was not a period in which no monetary contraction of the kind took place, yet you had the fall of prices?—But the monetary contraction did take place.

13,498. But not of the kind that you spoke of?—The withdrawal of the amount of legal tender—the contraction of the amount.

13,499. The withdrawal of inconvertible paper money?—The legal tender.

13,500. The legal tender?—Yes.

13,501. But you do not approve of inconvertible paper money?—No.

13,502. Therefore you would approve of the fall of prices that occurred between 1815 and 1840, because it was due to the withdrawal of inconvertible paper, but you object to the fall of prices now because it is due to a different cause?—I do not approve of the contraction of the amount of money available for the use of the people at any time.

13,503. So that if you had inconvertible paper you would always stick to it?—Failing something else it would be necessary. There is no occasion in the present age to revert to incontrovertible paper because you have a money metal—a money metal which is held in favour by three-fourths of the inhabitants of the globe. You have a money metal to which you should resort instead of paper, and which, I think, is a sounder resource.

13,504. But I am pointing out cases of fall of price which has occurred when you have got that purchase money in metal?—We have not had that monetary metal in use in this country for the last 20 years.

13,505. Not a standard metal, but you have had the metal in use?—Yes.

Contraction of currency.

13,506. About the course of the contraction of gold that you spoke of, are you quite sure that it is due to the monetary legislation of the last 20 years?—I feel absolutely sure.

13,507. Can you correct it with specific Acts of Legislation, and exclude the other courses which affect the gold?—The specific Act of Legislation which I can claim first would be the disuse of silver in this country as long ago as 1816.

13,508. That could not have caused the fall of prices in the last 20 years; that was not a change of monetary legislation in the last 20 years?—That disuse, I was going to explain, did not affect us, because the Mints of the Latin Union during the whole of that time were open to the free coinage of both metals. It was in 1873, after the French and German war, when Germany demonetised silver, and that was immediately followed by the closing of the mints of the Latin Union. Since that time, silver has been demonetised generally, which must have caused a contraction in money. There must be a loss.

13,509. You say it must have caused a contraction of gold. The phrase you have got in your paper is, a contraction of gold?—The disuse of silver would, of course, cause a much greater demand for gold.

Increased demand for gold and disuse of silver.

13,510. But you have not investigated how much greater the demand for gold there has been on account of the disuse of silver, have you gone into the question?—I cannot go into the figures as to the amount of the increased demand.

13,511. But is it worth having an opinion at all unless you go into the figures?—I think that the legislation to which I have referred must account for a contraction of the volume of money.

13,512. But is it not a question to be examined according to the facts?—Yes.

13,513. Let me put the case hypothetically; if it should be the case that the chief cause in the demand for gold in the last 20 years has been a demand by certain military governments, presumably for military purposes, how can you say that it is the monetary legislation which has caused a great demand for gold, and the contraction of gold in the last 20 years?—The demand for gold is not wholly on the part of governments for military purposes. There is a great demand for gold on the part of the public and an increasing demand.

13,514. Are you quite sure?—The use of gold is very much increasing.

13,515. How much gold has the Government of Russia accumulated in the last 20 years?—I do not know, perhaps ten millions.

13,516. Supposing I should tell you that they have accumulated 100 millions, that is five years' production, according to the production of recent years, would not that affect your opinion as to its being a monetary legislation which has caused the depression?—It would intensify my opinion. If there is an increased demand on the part of the nations for gold, how can we sustain gold prices here, if everyone is swabbing up gold.

13,517. But is it monetary legislation or other action of a different kind; you are pressing the monetary remedy because you say the depression is owing to monetary legislation, but how far is it monetary legislation?—Of course, the absorption of gold by countries would cause scarcity and appreciation. If Russia has locked up 100,000,000 of gold it would help towards the appreciation of gold, and, so far, that would not be monetary legislation.

13,518. If I were to tell you that one of the principal other demands for gold in the last 20 years has been the demand for India, which has not been promoted by monetary legislation at all, would not that affect your opinion?—I think it intensifies my opinion.

13,519. I am suggesting other causes for the contraction of gold, and what I wish to have your opinion upon is whether these causes have not been sufficient without monetary legislation; it is a question of degree?—I see. There are various causes for the appreciation of gold; the large absorption of it by other countries is one.

13,520. Then I am suggesting that, and I wish to know whether you can go into a point of that kind?—The increase of demand for gold and the disuse of silver.

13,521. How much silver has been disused?—It is not used at all; the mints are not open to silver.

13,522. Not used in a particular way, but is not silver used much more largely now than it was 20 years ago?—As money?

13,523. As money?—Not in this country.

13,524. I am not saying in this country?—Not in gold standard countries.

13,525. I am speaking of the question generally?—I do not know; I cannot answer that question.

13,526. How much less silver is used in Germany than was the case 25 years ago?—I cannot answer that. I have been very anxiously looking for statistics on this very point, as to the amount of money in this country.

13,527. You attach so much importance to monetary legislation, and to a certain disuse of silver, that I wish to put this question as to the existence of other causes, to elicit your view of the facts, but you cannot go any further, can you?—To some extent the increased demand for gold has caused an appreciation. I allow that to be so to some extent.

13,528. But still it is not a matter of monetary legislation?—To what proportion I cannot say.

13,529. You cannot give me any information as to the disuse of silver?—No, I cannot, but my argument is that the disuse of silver has been one of the causes of this increased demand for gold.

13,530. Has it been such a serious cause?—A very serious cause.

Statistics of circulation of gold and silver.

13,531. To what degree has it operated, and I ask the question, what has been the disuse of silver?—I cannot tell you. The Board of Trade do not issue any statistics as to the amount of money, of legal tender money, in this country. We have had so far to get what information we have from the United States.

13,532. The Mint, I believe, have published estimates at different times?—I have never been able to discover any figures published by our own Board of Trade as to what is the amount of legal tender per head of the population of this country.

13,533. I say that it is the business of the Treasury?—I did not know that.

13,534. Has your attention been drawn to a statement by Mr. Goschen in a speech which he made some years ago in which he gave various estimates as to the circulation of gold and silver?—I do not remember the speech that you allude to.

13,535. You are not aware that certain estimates are made by different authorities?—I have heard of estimates being made.

13,536. Is it possible to have anything made but an estimate?—I am not aware that they are official.

13,537. They are not official?—Of course not, the only official estimates we have come from the United States even with regard to our own currency.

13,538. Are not some of those estimates of the United States with regard to the United States very wild and misleading altogether as to the amount of gold and silver coin in circulation?—I believe Mr. Atkinson, who was the head of the Mint in the United States, was supposed to be one of the first statists of the world, and his figures I have read, and his figures give a considerable amount of reduction in this country in the ten years from 1882 to 1892.

13,539. But he cannot have known much about it, I think?—It has never been asserted that he was wrong.

13,540. But surely there are means of finding out these things, and they are not worth anything unless you know how the sum is done?—If Mr. Atkinson's figures are wrong we should like to know it.

13,541. Have you looked at how they are made up?—Mr. Atkinson's figures were 142,000,000 of gold in this country in 1882, and 102,000,000 in 1892.

13,542. But he did not tell you how he did the sum?—No, he did not.

13,543. Mr. Atkinson is not the Master of the Mint in the United States, I think that is not his position, is it?—I think he was.

13,544. I know Mr. Atkinson was a distinguished statistician of the United States, but he is a gentleman of Boston and not a Master of the Mint?—I suppose that he had all the information that could be afforded to him in order to form those estimates.

13,545. But is it not the case that the United States, I mean the currency authorities, continually put forward statements as to the amount of legal tender in the United States which are untrue, because they determine the amount of gold and silver coin and the amount of issue of paper and add them together?—That may be so. I could not say that it is not so. I do not know enough of the United States and the preparation of their statistics to say whether he is wrong or not.

Fall in prices.

13,546. (*Mr. Little.*) When you say that you desire stability of prices you do not mean a dead level of prices, but a comparative stability?—I mean a comparative stability.

13,547. Upon which a bargain can be based with a hope of carrying out the contract?—That is exactly what I do mean.

13,548. The continual fall of prices has made it impossible for a farmer to calculate the value of the land that he is hiring?—Quite impossible.

13,549. And rents that are fixed to-day which are perfectly reasonable rents may be made excessive rents by a continual fall?—Certainly.

13,550. There is no basis of value at the present time that can be really depended upon?—There is none.

13,551. And is not that one of the most serious features of the present depression?—It is one of the most serious features of the present depression.

13,552. You are an inspector under the Board of Agriculture, are you not?—Yes.

Leicestershire custom and Agricultural Holdings Act compared.

13,553. And president of the local branch of the Surveyors' Institution?—I was for three years, and now I am a member of the Council of the Surveyors' Institution.

13,554. You are fully acquainted with the relations of landlord and tenant, and with the agreements which are in force, and of the operation of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes, I am.

13,555. Has that Act been put into operation much in Leicestershire ?—It is not a popular Act in Leicestershire. We have in Leicestershire a very good custom of the country which has worked very well and very fairly between landlord and tenant.

13,556. Did your Valuers' Associations after the passing of the Act meet and discuss the subject of allowances for improvements, and lay down a scale ?—They did, and very fully.

13,557. Is that scale generally accepted as fair between landlord and tenant ?—It is generally accepted as fair.

13,558. Is it adopted in preference to the Agricultural Holdings Act ?—Yes.

13,559. Without putting the Act into operation ?—It is.

13,560. Is it secured by the tenants' agreements ?—The custom is held to secure it.

13,561. Even without an agreement ?—Even without an agreement. The allowances are not usually stated in the agreement.

13,562. But it is not thought necessary to give notice of the claim under the Agricultural Holdings Act; the arbitration is not made under the Act, is it ?—In many cases it is not.

13,563. In many cases it is simply made between the incoming tenant and the outgoing tenant, or between the landlord and the outgoing tenant ?—It is usually made between the landlord and the outgoing tenant.

13,564. Do you think that there is in Leicestershire any real or substantial grievance in connexion with the Agricultural Holdings Act ?—None whatever.

13,565. Have you any suggestions to make as to the practical working of the Act; could it be simplified in any way ?—We have discussed it on various occasions, I do not myself see any practical use in an amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act.

13,566. Is it not a necessary consequence of the interference between landlord and tenant that a complicated procedure must be gone through ?—Yes, I think it is found most unfortunate, and it always works badly. When the notices are given by the tenants it usually follows that a counter notice is given by the landlord and friction arises which never did arise before. I think it is very unfortunate that these notices are required at all. With regard to the first schedule, the improvements under the Act as to which I believe there is some discussion now, as a matter of fact the tenants do not do these improvements at all.

13,567. Would you say that they were prevented from doing them from the fear of not getting compensation ?—No.

Labourers' wages.

13,568. With regard to the cost of labour, I think you said that the present rate of wages is 15*s.* per week, the ordinary wages of an agricultural labourer ?—16*s.* per week.

13,569. Have you seen Mr. Bear's report of the Melton Mowbray district ?—Yes.

13,570. He reports the wages at 15*s.* per week ?—The lowest rate of wages in the county would be in the Melton division.

13,571. Does not he state in the report that it is the lowest wage district in the country ?—I think he does.

13,572. Therefore if a statement were made to this Commission that the report of the Labour Commission gives wages several shillings per week lower than they are, that would not be an accurate statement ?—No.

13,573. The statement that Mr. Bear's report shows the wages several shillings lower than they are actually would be inaccurate ?—It would.

13,574. And Mr. Bear's statement would be accurate that 15*s.* per week would be the wages in the Melton district which is lower than the average of the country ?—Yes, I think it would.

Milk.

13,575. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I think you said that milk selling was increasing in Leicestershire ?—I did.

13,576. And also that the prices were beginning to fall ?—Yes.

13,577. Do I gather from you, then, that there is no considerable opening in your view for agriculture in that direction in Leicestershire by increasing the sale of milk ?—I do not think there is.

13,578. You think it has reached its limits ?—Yes.

13,579. Are great towns like Leicester amply supplied ? Do you think that the children of the poor people get milk regularly ?—I think so, they get the separated milk, too, from the dairies. They now take the creamy fat away and sell that milk at a very low rate.

13,580. So that if there was a large increase of the trade it would tend to make the whole of it unprofitable ?—Yes, I think it would.

Claims and counter-claims.

13,581. One word with regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act. The difficulties arise generally when the notices of the counterclaims are given, do I understand that ?—That is generally the cause of a difficulty, and bad feeling arises in the settlement of those things.

13,582. Is there any practical necessity for notices being required by law on either side ?—That has been the subject of arbitration in various cases that I know of, and it has been held that there is no necessity for the notice.

13,583. But I want to ask your opinion as a gentleman of much practice and having great experience in a great many valuations as I understand. When there is a change of tenancy, is there any practical necessity for notices being given by the tenant on the one side or the landlord on the other ? Can a fair compensation be made between the two without notice ?—Perfectly well.

13,584. It is the case, I think, in many countries where compensation is given under custom that no notice is required by either side ?—It is the case.

13,585. And you never found any practical difficulty ?—The difficulty arises from the notice, the notice creates the difficulty.

13,586. There would be no difficulty in carrying out compensation as far as you are aware of if no notices were given at all ?—None whatever.

Position of new tenants in Leicestershire.

13,587. I think you said that the new tenants in Leicestershire were in such a position now that they would make their own terms practically, on taking a farm ?—Yes.

13,588. Does that apply to the terms of tenure as well as the rent ?—Yes.

13,589. If a tenant wished to have a more liberal agreement on any changes under his system of tenure he would be able to get them ?—Certainly; he practically makes his own terms.

13,590. Are many changes made in agreements now ?—Oh, yes, the restrictions as to selling off produce have been very largely relaxed.

13,591. So that practically the tenant even in Leicestershire where distress is not so great as in other counties, is in a condition to make favourable terms ?—Yes, he can take land on almost any terms that he chooses.

13,592. That is not an exaggerated statement at all ?—Not at all providing, I should say, that the landlord has a good substantial man.

13,593. What you mean is that a tenant who would be held to be a desirable tenant by a landlord can take a farm in Leicestershire practically on his own terms ?—That is what I mean.

Changes in currency and fall in prices.

13,594. You said the real cause of depression was the fall in prices and that there could be no real remedy unless by some means the fall was arrested ?—That is my view.

13,595. And this applies, I assume, still more to other districts where the distress is greater than it does to Leicestershire ?—Yes, it does.

13,596. You told us just now that you attribute the fall in prices to the monetary changes which occurred 20 years ago by legislation, and that fall should be arrested, in your opinion in one of three different ways: I want to ask you with regard to the first one, do you see any prospect of an increase at all, in the increase of gold proportionate to the increased demand for it ?—I do not. I think that the world has been fully explored, and that placer or alluvial gold does not exist in the world to any extent.

13,597. You disapprove of an issue of irredeemable paper ?—I do.

13,598. And the remedy I gather, from what you told me, that you look to, is the re-use of silver?—That seems to be the only possible remedy, for that fall of price which is the cause of the agricultural depression.

13,599. You were asked by Mr. Giffen whether there had not been periods of great changes of prices in former days, I would ask you this question in addition to that; there was a great change of prices I think at the time when the great gold discoveries were made? —A very great change.

13,600. There was then a great expansion of the currency?—Yes.

13,601. But that was accompanied by a period of almost unequalled prosperity?—Very great prosperity in industries of all kinds.

Increased demand for gold and disuse of silver.

13,602. Well, then, I understand you to contend that by the disuse of silver as legal tender money by many nations during the last 20 years there has been a great contraction in the volume of the money of the world? —Yes.

13,603. And that has been accompanied by a period of very great depression?—Yes; in consequence a fall in prices has taken place.

13,604. Mr. Giffen suggested to you just now that there might be other causes for the appreciation of gold besides the disuse of silver. I understand that you do not deny that, but you contend that the disuse of silver has had a very large effect in causing the appreciation of gold, and the fall of prices which has resulted from it?—Yes; and I meant to say further that the disuse of silver has created that unusual demand for gold to a great extent.

13,605. As to the details, and the precise amount by which silver has been used in any given country, such as Germany, you do not pretend that you are prepared to give figures of that kind?—No, I do not.

13,606. You were asked this question: Can stability of prices under any circumstances be permanently expected? What you aim at, I understand, is the greatest stability that is attainable?—That is what I mean.

13,607. And you hold, if I understood you rightly, that that could be attained by the joint use of gold and silver as legal tender money, to a greater degree than by the use of gold alone?—Certainly.

Rates.

13,608. (*Mr. Dalton*). I think you expressed the view that personal property should pay, as well as real, towards the poor and highway rates?—Yes.

13,609. You know that a considerable portion of the expense of the maintenance of the poor is now borne by Imperial subventions?—Yes.

13,610. And it is the case, is it not, that in your county, as well as in others, the rates levied for the relief of the poor have gone down?—Yes. I think that that is so.

13,611. Then with regard to the highway rates, in most counties now nearly the whole cost of the maintenance of the main roads is covered by the extra money that they receive under the Act of 1888?—A proportion is paid in that way.

13,612. Is not the amount the county gets, sufficient to cover nearly the whole; it would be an exceptional county if it is not?—I cannot answer that question.

13,613. Taking the remainder of the highways—the country lanes—these are necessary to maintain the value of the land, are they not?—Yes.

13,614. Do not they add very largely to the value, and would not the value of the land go down altogether, if they were not kept up?—It would.

13,615. What kind of personality do you think should contribute towards the highway rates?—What I rather meant was, that these roads are so largely used by people who pay nothing towards their maintenance. We find that particularly in our county, which is so largely occupied by renters, people who take large houses, with great fortunes derived from business. They entirely escape the payment of local rates, although they have got a large establishment of horses and carriages.

13,616. How do they escape the payment of the rates if they come and settle down in the county?—They take furnished houses as a rule, and those rates are always paid by the owner.

13,617. But the property pays it, and they are paying rates in their own district, I suppose?—In what way?

13,618. Would you bring them in more than now; how would you rate them; have you any plan for it?—No, I have no plan for it. I think that the people with large incomes, say from Funds and Consols, if they take a small house in the county, pay nothing.

13,619. They pay to the Imperial subventions?—They pay income tax, that is all; we have to pay income tax as well.

13,620. How would you rate them; you have got no plan for it?—No, unless they were rated in the same way as tithes are rated.

13,621. How could they be?—I have not considered any plan, but it seems to me to be fair.

Effect of closing ports to foreign produce.

13,622. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What would be the effect, presuming that the English ports were shut to foreign produce for 12 months?—Were closed altogether?

13,623. Yes, to foreign commodities?—I do not know how the people would be fed.

13,624. Would it result in a considerable rise in price?—Yes, considerable.

13,625. So, in the absence of foreign competition prices would then rise very considerably?—If no food stuffs came in from abroad for 12 months the price of food stuffs would very largely rise.

Contraction of currency.

13,626. What contraction do you estimate there is in the volume of currency as compared with 20 years ago?—The only information I have been able to get, as I explained when Mr. Giffen asked me, is that obtained from the statistics of Mr. Atkinson of the United States, and he gave it that the volume of money in this country, the legal tender money, was 142,000,000 in 1882 and 102,000,000 in 1892, showing a decrease of 40,000,000 in the 10 years.

13,627. Would your proposals allow silver to be coined to any amount?—The same as gold, to any amount.

Effect of bi-metallic currency.

13,628. What effect would that have upon the amount of silver that would be coined?—A very large amount of silver would be coined, I think, which would expand the volume of money and increase the amount of legal tender money.

13,629. Supposing I wanted to go to the bankers to cash a cheque, should I be compelled to take it in silver?—Yes, if they chose. The same thing happens in France exactly at the present moment. If I take in a cheque for 1,000 francs on the Bank of France they can pay me in silver if they choose.

13,630. Would not that be a considerable inconvenience?—I do not know that the notes of the Bank of France are at a discount on account of that: they are usually at a premium in foreign countries, and as good an instrument of credit as the Bank of England note.

13,631. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Does the Bank of France issue to customers in small change?—They could, if they chose, pay in silver. You asked me about the amount of money?

Amount of money per head of population.

13,632. Yes?—I do not know whether I know accurately, but I have information that the amount of money per head of the people in this country is about 51*s.* as compared with 8*l.* a head of the population in France, and 5*l.* a head in the United States of America, so you see that although we are supposed to be the country possessing a very large amount of the money of the world, the amount of money per head of our population is considerably less than in those two countries.

Balance money at banks available for currency.

13,633. You said just now that there were, in the "Times" Financial Report, three records broken, that the largest bank balance was now held?—Yes.

13,634. And the highest price for converted Consols? —Yes.

13,635. Would not that tend to show that there was a large amount of money—larger than there has ever been before—waiting to be used?—It would show, in my opinion, that trade being bad and risky in consequence of ever falling prices, the tendency is to withdraw money from trade and to put it out to interest, so that the very contraction of which I made complaint might be the cause of that large balance which is accumulated and visible.

13,636. But there is a large volume of money now waiting to be used?—There is a large balance at the

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Bank, but I do not know where else there is a large volume of money than at the Bank of England—not in the other banks.

13,637. And this is available for use, if the people who own it wish to use it?—Yes, I think that that large balance is accounted for in the way that I said, that now the tendency is to withdraw money from trade. This money is not used for paying wages or exchanging products, and it is put on deposit; if, in the country bank it comes to the London agent, and the London agent deposits it with the Bank of England, so that all this available money is seen and visible.

13,638. But the largest amount of money that has ever been in the Bank of England is now ready for currency?—In the Bank of England.

13,639. (*Viscount Cobham.*) And in the other banks too?—I thought that the large balances of the other banks were deposited with the Bank of England.

13,640. (*Mr. Lambert.*) You would not like to say there was a larger amount of balance in other banks besides the Bank of England?—I would not like to say that.

Competition for farms.

13,641. You say there is a great demand for farms in Leicestershire?—Yes, in Leicestershire.

13,642. How many applicants do you say you would get for a decent farm of 120 acres?—10 or 12.

13,643. Did I understand you to suggest that the tenants could make their own terms?—Practically.

13,644. How are the farms let; I mean, is it by the higgling of the market?—I hardly understand your question.

The fixing of rent.

13,645. How is the rent fixed, and how are the other conditions fixed?—A certain amount is asked, and it is very seldom obtained, the man says I will not give more than so much.

13,646. But there are a dozen men who are in competition?—In the first instance, if an advertisement appeared for a farm of 120 acres, a dozen applications would be received; half of the applicants would, probably, come and look at it and not entertain the proposal; half of those left would not be suitable, and it would be left in the hands of two or three eligible applicants.

13,647. And those would compete one with another for the farm?—In the way of rent they would not compete.

13,648. But if the general conditions of tenancy were favourable, would they not?—They would not outbid each other for the sake of getting on the farm.

13,649. Has not that been the case?—No, I think not.

Tenants' capital.

13,650. Why do you say that some tenants have been ruined?—In the first instance, when prices began to go down and agriculture began to be bad it was supposed that every year would be a better one than the last one, and they paid more rent than they ought to have paid—considerably more.

13,651. A large amount of rent out of capital?—Yes, very large.

13,652. Does that mean that tenants have not so much capital now as formerly?—Nothing like it; it has completely melted away.

13,653. Owing to paying a great deal of rent out of capital?—In part.

Reduction of rents.

13,654. You say that a greater reduction is usually given to a new tenant than is given to the old?—I am sorry to say we do find that in practice. If a landlord lets his old tenant go he has to take less rent and spend more money for the new tenant than if he had kept the old tenant.

Leases and yearly agreements compared.

13,655. The system of yearly tenancies is now mostly in vogue?—Yes, I do not know of a lease anywhere.

13,656. That does not tend to encourage the expenditure of capital on the farm by a tenant if he has it to spend?—No, but beyond acts of husbandry and the ordinary matters of cultivation and feeding stuff; the tenant according to my experience never does execute improvements.

Diminution of capital and tenants' improvements.

13,657. You say that the number of labourers employed on the land is much reduced owing to the reluctance of farmers to effect improvements as formerly, what improvements do you mean?—When the man was making money by farming he would not object to doing draining; if a portion of a field wanted draining he would do it himself. Now, I do not know a case where a tenant lays a single drain pipe.

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13,658. Is that owing to the insecurity of the tenure?—Not at all, but owing to the reduction of the amount of his capital he has not the money to spend; he really has not it. He does not farm as well as he used to do.

13,659. He does not farm as well as formerly because he has lost a good deal of capital?—Exactly.

Railway rates.

13,660. Do you know of any case of preferential railway rates, I mean of railways giving better facilities or cheaper facilities for transit for foreign produce than they do to home produce?—Yes.

13,661. Could you give an instance?—Yes; take the carriage of American cheese from Liverpool to London. Leicestershire would be half way on the line between Liverpool and London. The rate from Leicester to London would be as great—I believe it is slightly in excess—as the rate would be from Liverpool to London although it is only half the distance. The preferential rate is given to American cheese.

13,662. Could you give any other instance. This is rather important in my own judgment?—I do not know of any other, I am afraid.

Bi-metallic currency.

13,663. (*Mr. Channing.*) I suppose in contemplating the free issue of silver, in addition to gold you would not contemplate it being used in bulk, but rather with the view of being a monetary basis for cheques and bank notes and other ways of transacting business?—Yes.

13,664. Your object is to extend the monetary basis?—Yes.

13,665. And you do not contemplate the physical inconvenience of a large amount of silver having to be handled?—You never experience it in France.

13,666. You believe it possible to obtain by international agreement some stable relation between the silver and the gold?—I think that legal enactments are absolutely omnipotent in maintaining the relative values of silver and gold.

Causes of fall in prices.

13,667. I suppose you recognise the other causes of the fall of prices; that is, of competition and the increase of means of communication and other causes of that kind have all lowered prices, as well as the cause to which you attribute the main fall?—Fractionally, I may say.

Small holdings in cheese-making districts.

13,668. I should like to ask what your experience is of the success of small holdings in the Melton district in connection with the dairy work and cheese work; do you think that the small holders have on the whole succeeded there or not?—I think they have in the cheese-making districts.

13,669. Are they men who have a large amount of capital in proportion to their acreage?—No, they would be men with a small amount of capital who work themselves and their families. The women of the family will principally do the cheese-making.

13,670. Have they found no difficulty in having these small holdings equipped by the landlords with the necessary buildings and so on?—That is always the difficulty, but I have not known any case where there has been any real difficulty about that where large farms have been divided up and the cottages have been converted, or something of that sort. The landlords have done what is necessary.

13,671. You say that the dairy work might be carried too far—that it might be over done. Would that remark apply to cheese-making too, or do you think there is room for further expansion?—Cheese-making is so slow a process that I do not think there is any likelihood of that being overdone. I think rather the milk selling might be overdone. As they are laid down to pasture of course farms are turned from plough farms into grazing farms.

Adulteration of milk.

13,672. Have you any opinion of the extent of fraud in using separated milk with other milk, and selling it as genuine and fresh milk?—No, I have not heard of it.

13,673. You have not heard any opinion as to the necessity of dealing with the matter?—No, I have not.

Diminution of tenants' capital and reductions of rent.

13,674. I understand from your answers to Mr. Lambert that the tenant's capital in a great many cases is being whittled down and reduced?—Very much.

13,675. And that would have been partially prevented by a greater reduction of rent?—Partially.

13,676. How far do you consider the reductions of rent have been uniform and general in Leicestershire? —I think very general. The cases where reductions of rent have not been great are with small owners who own one farm perhaps, and perhaps their main income comes from that; of course they are very reluctant, and fight against a reduction of rent much more than the large landowner does.

13,677. Still the tenant's capital has been whittled away in this way, and rents have not been fully earned by the land?—Oh, no; in the first instance, particularly. I think now, as far as possible, the rents have been adjusted to meet the times, but in the first instance, I think that the tenants did pay more rent than they should have done.

Labourers' wages.

13,678. Can you give any particulars of the agricultural wages in Rutland, for instance, adjoining Leicestershire?—No; I do not think I can.

13,679. Are they considerably lower?—I think they would be the same as about Melton Mowbray, the 15*s*. that Mr. Bear speaks of in his report.

Reduction of rent of allotments.

13,680. With regard to the rents of allotments, are you aware that the general practice of landowners is not to make the same reduction to the allotment tenants as to farmers?—The allotments are usually let at more rent than the average rent of the farm from which they are taken, but the rent of allotments, as far as my experience goes, has considerably fallen of late years.

13,681. What I am asking is whether it is not usually in places like Northamptonshire, where there is a regular annual reduction to the tenant farmers that the reduction is not proportionately made to the allotment tenants; is that your experience?—I think that would be so.

13,682. It is stated by agents that the allotment tenants consume what they grow upon the holding, and therefore there is not the same need for a reduction?—Yes.

13,683. That is the view that the agents generally take of it?—I think the rents of allotments have not been reduced in the same proportion as the rents of farms.

13,684. I do not mean that. I mean where there is a reduction or remission made to the tenant farmer that the remission is not extended proportionately to the allotment holder?—No.

13,685. I thought you gave the Commission rather the other impression. I wanted to clear that up?—That is so. What I mean is that in cases where allotments are taken now the rent at which they are taken is very much less than it used to be when a new field was taken.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

13,686. Less than it was five or 10 years ago?—Considerably less.

Official valuers.

13,687. That is a matter of notoriety. Now about the Agricultural Holdings Act. You are aware that it has been suggested that the procedure might be cheapened by taking a single referee selected from an official list of valuers; that is a suggestion which has been frequently made?—Yes.

13,688. You are connected with the Surveyors' Institute?—I am.

13,689. Is it probable, in your opinion, that the umpires who have been placed on their lists by the Land Commissioners in past years, especially those in connexion with the Surveyors' Institute, are competent men to deal with questions of that kind?—Very much so, I should say.

13,690. Do you think that you could for each county select a list of competent men of that kind?—I think it would work very well in practice, but I think there would be a very great feeling against it. The tenants have always liked to choose their own men to act for them. I always find that when I name one person he is generally resisted.

13,691. As a matter of fact, would not men selected in this way by the County Council and the Board of Agriculture, and perhaps in connection with the Surveyors' Institute, be more competent than voluntary valuers scattered about in the counties?—I think perhaps they would.

Payment of rent in kind and currency compared.

13,692. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Supposing that 20 years ago farmers had agreed with their landlords to pay rent in kind, and that they had continued up to the present time under that agreement, would they have felt the depression as they do now; that is to say, if they had agreed to pay so many quarters of corn and so many bullocks and so many sheep, and to hand them over to the landlord, instead of a money payment, would they have felt the depression the same as now?—No, but rent is not the greatest factor in the depression. I believe in some counties if land were let at no rent at all the occupier could not make it answer; in fact, I am sure that that is the case. In such a county as Essex, for instance, and parts of Bedfordshire, I find we cannot get any rent on some of the plough farms there.

13,693. (*Chairman.*) Do you mean on an average of years or only last year?—On an average of years. Of course it would have been much better to pay in wheat than in gold; they would be much better off, because gold has very much risen in value and wheat has very much fallen in value. Of course they would have been better off to that extent.

13,694. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) It would be better for the farmer at the present day to pay in kind than in money in the case of land that does not pay rent?—Yes, only that the rent is constantly being re-adjusted; it amounts to the same thing. I understand you mean that if 20 years ago a farmer had agreed to pay so many quarters of wheat to his landlord he would be paying the same amount in quarters of wheat to-day?

13,695. Yes?—But, as it was, he agreed to pay so much gold, and as a consequence of gold having risen he is paying much less gold to-day.

13,696. Would it be possible to arrange to pay rent in kind?—No, I do not think so. I think that it is going back to barter, which does not seem to be popular at all; that would be retrocession.

Currency and fluctuations in prices.

13,697. (*Mr. Everett.*) You have evidently by your evidence given a good deal of attention to matters of currency, and your reading shortly is, I take it, that there is a very intimate connection between the general level of prices and the supply of money, the greater abundance or less abundance of money in supply at the time?—A very intimate connection.

13,698. Should I be going too far in saying that it is the main factor in the higher or lower general level of prices?—In my opinion it is the main factor.

13,699. That great changes in price over a period of a good many years, upwards or downwards, have almost always proceeded from that root?—I should say always.

13,700. You are aware probably that there was a great expansion in the supply of money after the discovery of America?—Yes.

13,701. And that was followed by a very great rise in price, was it not, all round?—Prices rose, I believe, four hundredfold.

13,702. Not so much; but there was a considerable rise established, and the era of industrial prosperity was greater than had ever been known before?—In the 15th century a bullock could be purchased for about 15*s*., so small and valuable was the amount of money.

13,703. You were asked about the stability of prices; I do not know whether you were aware of it—was the supply of gold and silver comparatively stable during the last century, the 18th century?—Yes, I believe it was.

13,704. And were the prices through the whole of that century, on the whole, fairly stable?—Yes, they were.

13,705. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Throughout the whole of the century?—I think so, so far as I know.

13,706. (*Mr. Everett.*) I do not know whether you have read the Report of the Committee that sat on agricultural distress, and which reported in July 1822. I see they say that the price of wheat, according to the Eton College Tables, whether taken in periods of 10 or 50 years, upon the average of the 150 years before 1797, had not exceeded 46*s*. per quarter? — They ranged near about that for an average of 150 years.

13,707. From 1797 to 1819 we came to a period of much higher prices, I think?—Yes.

13,708. 1797 was the period when inconvertible paper money took the place of gold and silver?—Yes.

13,709. We hung up our metallic standard and got a paper on printing-press standard, and as that was issued abundantly we got to a much higher level of prices?—Yes.

13,710. And when we returned to the metallic standard in 1819, was that attended by any great change of prices?—By a great fall of prices, and great agricultural depression.

The Corn Laws, 1815.

13,711. The Corn Laws were imposed, I think, in 1815?—Yes.

13,712. Did the Corn Laws imposed in 1815 override the fall in prices?—No.

13,713. You are not cognisant of that. Though the Corn Laws were imposed in 1815, in the period of 30 years following 1819, there was a great descent in the general level of prices, was there not?—Yes. The Corn Laws had no effect, it was the change in the monetary standard.

Low prices.

13,714. And the years following 1819 were a period of low prices in comparison with the previous period?—Yes.

13,715. I believe there is a general idea at the present time that low prices are very beneficial to a country, is there not?—I believe there is.

13,716. Did the country find them beneficial, do you happen to know, between 1830 and 1840?—No, they did not.

13,717. Do you know the history of Leicester and the parishes round there, and the depth to which wages fell during those disastrous years, and the height to which poor rates rose?—I have heard of it.

13,718. The low prices did not bring a great blessing to the nation?—No.

Effect of gold discoveries and free trade on prices.

13,719. Then we come to the period of the gold discoveries, beginning in 1848 or 1849; they were followed by rising prices?—They were; and great prosperity.

13,720. Instead of the rising prices cursing the nation they blessed the nation?—It was a very great blessing.

13,721. And free trade came in about the same time as the gold discoveries began?—A few years before 1846, I think it was.

13,722. And we had free importation of foreign corn, and goods of nearly all kinds?—The whole time that prices were rising.

13,723. And yet in spite of foreign competition prices rather rose than fell?—That is so.

13,724. And notwithstanding that they rose the country prospered very much?—Very much.

Effect of legislation against silver.

13,725. In this country legislation against silver began in 1816?—Yes.

13,726. When we changed the standard of the country, which had been silver, to gold?—Lord Liverpool's ministry affected that change.

13,727. But no considerable effect followed that for many years, did it?—There was no disruption of the ratio at all; it was only fractional. Although silver was demonetised in that year, it made no change in the relative values of gold and silver.

Demonetisation of silver by Latin Union.

13,728. Gold and silver were linked together by the open mints of other countries?—It was a legal enactment of the Latin Union.

13,729. (*Mr. Giffen.*) When did the Latin Union come into existence?—About the beginning of the century.

13,730. Would you be surprised to know that it was not until 1860?—No.

13,731. (*Mr. Everett.*) You referred to the French law; not the arrangement under the Latin Union?—The French law, under which silver and gold were taken and coined in France.

13,732. Then beginning shortly after the Franco-Prussian war, I think Germany first, and then the United States, and then France, Italy, Austria, and lately India, have legislated against silver?—Yes, they have legislated to destroy the monetary value of silver.

13,733. Did this country appoint a Committee of the House of Commons in 1876, over which Mr. Goschen presided, to inquire into the cause of the divergence between gold and silver then beginning to show itself?—Yes.

13,734. Did that Committee report that if effect should be given to the policy of substituting gold for silver, and displacing silver from the place it had occupied over at least as large an area as gold, that no possible limit could be assigned to the further change in value which would inevitably take place?—I have understood so.

13,735. This series of enactments against silver were in the nature of protection to gold, were they not?—Certainly.

13,736. They were favouring the gold metal over the other?—Favouring the gold owner, the creditor, against the debtor and producer.

13,737. And giving an artificial value to the protected metal?—Yes, favouring the wealthy classes as against the many poorer classes.

13,738. Did that injure the producers of commodities generally who had to buy their gold with their commodities?—Yes, it did.

13,739. Did that very seriously interfere with contracts, with mortgages and leases?—Very seriously.

13,740. In effect, did it rob and ruin wholesale by law?—Yes, it did; it ruined debtors very largely.

13,741. And the cause which ruined them was not a natural cause, but a change of legislation?—Yes.

13,742. In one country after another that was the case?—It was a work of human law.

13,743. You desire, I understand, to see a stable standard?—Yes.

13,744. The most stable that can be obtained?—Yes.

13,745. And which is the most stable of the two of the most precious metals, silver or gold?—Silver, certainly.

13,746. For the last 20 years has there been any serious change in the general level of prices in silver standard countries?—In India the prices have been fairly stable.

13,747. Would you say then that the movement between the metals, has been in the gold and not in the silver?—I say that gold has risen, not that silver has fallen, as measured by commodities.

13,748. Are you aware that it is a current idea that gold in this country is absolutely stable and immovable in value?—I am aware that there is an opinion of that kind, which is absolutely erroneous, as it seems to me—

13,749. And you are an advocate, to use a figurative term, of re-marrying the two precious metals?—I am.

13,750. And in that way, judging from the experience of the past, you anticipate an increased stability of the standard?—Certainly.

13,751. Are you aware that the Gold and Silver Commission reported that during the 200 years previous to 1873, in which period the two metals were kept married through open mints, there was no material change of value between the two metals?—I am.

13,752. And also that the probability was, that if a group of nations agreed again to re-marry them, they would continue as one money?—Yes.

13,753. Was money of either of the two precious metals a good thing?—Certainly.

13,754. A thing very acceptable to everybody?—A most necessary thing.

13,755. Do you know of any experience of any individual or any country having had too much either of silver or gold?—I have never heard of it.

13,756. Since mints have been closed in different countries against silver, has the tendency to protection increased or decreased?—It has increased very largely.

13,757. The closing of the mints to one metal has encouraged the putting of duties on imports in France?—In France and Germany and the United States, and it is causing an agitation in favour of protection in this country.

13,758. Are you aware that we ourselves are proposing to resort to protection in India, at least to import duties in India, this free trade Government?—I am.

Free mints and free ports.

13,759. Do free mints and free ports go particularly well together?—Yes, they do.

13,760. The protection of one of the precious metals leads to other protections to counterbalance it?—The protection of one of the precious metals is a protection of the richer classes against the poorer.

13,761. You were asked by Mr. Lambert with regard to the accumulation of money at the bank; is it the fact that when industry is unprofitable, money always tends to accumulate at the centre?—Always; money which is not used in paying wages is withdrawn and hoarded in consequence of the fall in prices.

13,762. People are afraid to use the money in industry and in the purchase of property?—Yes.

13,763. It is less risky to hoard the money than to use it in investments and in industry?—Yes; and yet that hoarded money is not unproductive. Money increases in purchase power while it is remaining idle. I think that the last blow, in my opinion, to the use of silver was the stopping of the free coinage of silver in India, which was necessarily followed by the repeal of the Sherman Act in the United States; those two recent blows to silver have been followed by the lowest level of wholesale prices ever known.

Particulars of farms.

13,764. (*Chairman.*) What has been your own experience in your own farm during the last few years; have you made a profit?—No. I have lost every year by it.

13,765. In respect of the 1,000 acres which you manage, what have you done there?—We lose very considerably; we cannot even make a rent. Our object is to keep it in an efficient state, and to work it so as to get some one to take it.

13,766. Has it been mainly land left in bad condition by the tenants?—No; it was in fairly good condition. I have 1,100 acres in one place in the arable part of Bedfordshire, but I have just let a large portion of this.

Statistics of Leicestershire.

13,767. Have you looked at the return which was prepared by Mr. Sparkes for this Commission?—Yes.

13,768. It apparently consists of a considerable number of details which he has gathered from circulars which he sent out to every parish in Leicestershire?—Yes.

13,769. Returns appear to have been gathered from 1,400 different farms, and he has tabulated these different returns into six divisions, and he makes out the result that the average rent per acre obtained at the present time is 1*l.* 8*s.* 11*d.*, and the average rent 10 years ago was 1*l.* 16*s.* 7*d.*; that appears to show a reduction of rent of 7*s.* 8*d.*, making an average of 21·29 per cent.?—Yes.

13,770. That seems a less reduction than you have estimated yourself?—I think that the reduction is more than that.

13,771. This apparently is the result of actual figures?—Yes; but I think he has not had replies to a great many of his applications.

13,772. It is apparently the result of 1,400 returns?—Yes.

13,773. That seems a rather large number from which to give an average?—There would be a tendency of those who have not been reduced to send returns while those who had all they wanted would take no notice of it.

13,774. Then he gives the average rates at 2*s.* 2*d.* in the pound?—Yes; in four divisions of Leicestershire.

13,775. That is an average of six divisions; they vary from 2*s.* 7*d.* in the pound to 1*s.* 9*d.* in the pound in the Melton division?—Yes; the Melton division.

13,776. 2*s.* 7*d.* in Hinckley and 1*s.* 9*d.* in the Melton division?—Yes.

13,777. The average for the whole county is 2*s.* 2*d.*?—I should have thought that was hardly high enough.

13,778. It seems a low rate?—In the next parish where I live it is between 5*s.* and 6*s.*

13,779. Is that an urban district?—No; it is a village of between 5,000 and 6,000 people.

13,780. Apparently it is rather the purely rural district which he has taken?—Yes.

Fluctuation of prices and inconvertible paper.

13,781. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You stated that the rise of prices at the beginning of the century reduced the issue of inconvertible paper?—Yes.

13,782. At what date did the issue of inconvertible paper begin?—At the end of the last century.

13,783. And when did it begin to be in excess?—In excess of what?

13,784. In excess so that it fell to a discount compared with gold?—I cannot say.

13,785. Did not the rise of prices take place before the paper came to a discount at all and when there was no over issue?—I am not aware that they did.

Closing of the Mint to silver.

13,786. The other question I wish to ask you is about what happened in 1816. You spoke of it as if that was the date when the change in the standard took place and silver ceased to be a standard money?—I believe that was so.

13,787. Is it not the case that practically for more than 100 years before 1816 there had been no coinage of silver in the country?—I am not aware of it.

13,788. Is it not the case?—I do not think so.

13,789. I believe it is the case. I am asking you whether you know the facts at all?—I believe the Mint was open to silver up to that time.

13,790. Is it not the case that the Mint was nominally open to silver, but that no silver came to the Mint?—I cannot say.

13,791. Was there not a law towards the end of the last century prohibiting silver being brought to the Mint?—I am not aware of that.

Changes in relative value of gold and silver.

13,792. Then do you say there has been no change in the relative value of gold and silver between 1803 and 1873, and that that was due to the Bi-metallic Law in France?—Yes; for a period of about 70 years antecedent to 1873 there was only a fractional change in the ratio.

13,793. Was there not a similar period in the 17th century from 1650 when you had a great fall in the relative value of gold and silver although every country in the world practised bi-metallism?—I do not know about the 17th century.

13,794. Was not that great change in the relative value of gold and silver in the 17th century the reason why the English economists in the 17th century like Sir William Petty and Locke at the end of the 17th century came to the conclusion that bi-metallism was impossible because you never had a stable ratio between gold and silver?—I am not aware of that. The bi-metallists of the 19th century came to a different conclusion.

13,795. But you have not heard of that?—I am not familiar with that.

13,796. (*Mr. Everett.*) In the time of Locke and Petty and the great writers on currency at that period, was it not the fact that gold and silver were both full legal tender in England, and that the mints were open to the coinage of both, and a mint value fixed as between the gold and silver?—That is my impression.

13,797. And they never suggested closing the mints to either metal, or that any alteration should be made other than in the ratio?—I never heard of it.

Fall in prices of agricultural produce.

13,798. (*Mr. Little.*) Might I ask one question on Mr. Sparkes' figures which you have referred to; would you look at page 9? You will find there that a calculation is given of the fall of prices of wool, beef, and mutton. The decrease in the price of wool is given at 32·12, that of beef 24·15, and that of mutton 22·55. Those are added altogether, and the table is divided by 3 to give the average loss of 29·60?—Yes.

13,799. That would be correct if wool, beef, and mutton were produced in the same quantities?—Yes.

13,800. But would that be the case that they would be produced in the same quantities?—No.

13,801. Wool, which has decreased 32 per cent., is only a small part of the gross production?—It is only a small part of the gross production.

13,802. And therefore the average arrived at is deceptive; it is not perfectly accurate?—Quite so.

The witness withdrew.

The Hon. E. G. Strutt called and examined.

13,803. (*Chairman.*) You are acting as agent for your brother, Lord Rayleigh, of his farm property in Essex, are you not?—Yes.

Land in hand.

13,804. And you have a very large amount of land in hand?—About 4,000 acres.

13,805. Besides that do you farm a considerable amount for other people?—Yes. I farm about 1,500 acres for myself, about 1,500 acres for Guy's Hospital, and 500 or 600 acres for other people.

13,806. Besides the 4,000 acres that you have in hand for your brother?—Yes.

13,807. Do you rent the 1,500 acres that you farm yourself?—Yes.

13,808. And in respect of your brother's property has that 4,000 acres gradually come into hand?—Yes, year by year.

13,809. From the tenants giving up?—Yes.

13,810. Is that the greater portion of his property?—About half of it is greater; the smaller half.

13,811. How long have you had it in hand?—About eight or nine years, the bulk of it.

13,812. How had it turned out as an operation?—This last year it had been a great failure. Taking the last seven years, I find after paying a moderate rent there has been about 6 per cent. on the capital invested of about 32,000*l.*; there is no charge for management there, the charge for management has to come out of that.

13,813. But you say that you have charged yourself with rent?—Yes, rent is charged; a moderate rent.

13,814. At what rate?—It varies on different farms, but I think the average is about 17*s.* or 18*s.* per acre after paying tithe.

13,815. The landlord paying the tithe?—Yes.

13,816. What do the tithes come to?—The tithes are roughly about 4*s.* to 5*s.* an acre.

13,817. Therefore the landlord only gets 14*s.*?—Yes.

13,818. But, including the tithe, it is about 18*s.* per acre?—Yes.

Particulars of farms,

13,819. What do you pay in respect of the 1,500 acres which you farm for yourself?—I do not do so well for myself.

13,820. What rent do you pay?—For a farm of 265 acres we pay a rent of 15*l.* and the tithe.

13,821. But in respect of the others what do you pay?—For another farm of 350 acres we pay a rent of 200*l.* and no tithe; the landlord pays the tithe. For another farm of 350 acres we pay a rent of about 28*s.* per acre, the landlord paying the tithe; that is all good grass land.

13,822. And in the case of Guy's Hospital, what has happened there?—The result of the farming of the Guy's Hospital land for the nine years that it has been in hand is that there is a total loss of 400*l*, no interest upon the capital employed of 13,000*l.*, and no rent was paid for two years, and in the other seven years rent was paid.

13,823. At what rate?—An average rate of about 17*s.* per acre, tithe free.

13,824. Is that nine years including the last?—Yes; that includes this last year.

13,825. And on this last year there has been a heavy loss?—Yes, the result would look better if the last six years were taken instead of the nine years; the first three years were very bad.

13,826. Was that because you took the land in bad condition?—It was in very bad condition.

13,827. Therefore you had to work it up before you began to make it pay?—Yes; it was in very bad order.

13,828. What course have you adopted to bring about this good result on your brothers' farms?—We went in seven or eight years ago for keeping cows.

Sale of milk.

13,829. And you supplied milk to London?—We supplied milk to London.

13,830. And that on the whole has paid well?—It has paid better than any other kind of stock-keeping.

Wheat and barley growing.

13,831. Do you continue to grow corn and wheat?—We grow wheat and barley, but we shall not grow much more wheat if the present prices continue, we shall grow a little for the sake of the straw.

Land laid down to grass.

13,832. But you have laid down a great deal of the land to grass, have you not?—Yes, I suppose during the last three or four years we have laid down between 600 and 700 acres in grass.

13,833–4. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do you sell off much produce besides milk?—We sell a great deal of wheat and barley.

Price of milk.

13,835. (*Chairman.*) Has the price of milk been maintained?—Last winter, owing to the drought, the price of milk has been higher than for some time. That was owing to the temporary effects of the drought.

13,836. But apart from that has it been maintained?—It has rather gone down than otherwise, and this year it has a tendency still to fall because the farmers have found it pay better than other things, and the milk buyers have offered lower prices for the milk contracts than they have done before.

13,837. Have the farmers done much the same in connexion with milk?—A great many Scotch farmers have come into Essex; the Scotch farmers have gone in for it, but the old fashioned Essex farmer has not.

Cost of working large areas.

13,838. Do you attribute the success over your neighbours to the large amount of land you have got in hand?—It enables us to work cheaper than it otherwise would be done.

13,839. You mean working on such a large scale?—Yes; I fancy so.

13,840. Are there any other properties in Essex dealt with in the same way?—No, I do not know of any.

Letting of land.

13,841. Have you found that you can let any of the land on your brother's estate?—We can let the best of his land that he has got now, but we have got into the swing of this milk business, and we continue it.

13,842. What could you let the best land at?—Perhaps 1*l.* an acre; the landlord paying the tithe. That would be for the best of it.

13,843. Is the land very stiff?—None of his land is stiff, it is not the three-horse land. It is fairly mixed soil, clay sub-soil.

Laying land down to grass.

13,844. Can it be laid down to grass?—It does not take to grass very well; it grows moderate grass.

13,845. Have you experience also of some of the very stiff land?—Some of the farms we farm ourselves are very stiff land.

13,846. It is perhaps due to that?—It is quite hopeless at the present price of corn to continue to grow it. The only alternative is to lay it down to grass.

13,847. What kind of grass would that grow?—Very moderate; but still, if treated well it might be worth a little laid down to grass.

13,848. What would you say it would be worth?—After a liberal treatment it might be worth 10*s.* per acre.

13,849. It would take some time and some expenditure to bring it to that?—Yes; the first year or so, I think it does pretty well, but three or four years after that it does badly, and then it begins to mend if you treat it well.

13,850. And you think it would be capable of producing a rent of 15*s.* per acre?—That includes tithe; the landlord paying the tithe, it is only 10*s.* really to the landlord.

Tithe.

13,851. Tithe must be very heavy in Essex?—Yes; it runs to about 5*s.*

Assessment to poor rate.

13,852. In the case of your land, what has resulted in the way of assessment to the poor rate?—The assessments to the poor rate are a great deal higher than the rental of the land at this moment in a great many of the unions of Essex. I gave a statement to Mr. Hunter Pringle, of all the farms which we had to deal with in the unions of Malden, Dunmow, and Chelmsford. I took every farm, not only those which suited my case, but every farm we had in hand. In all there was some increase; some of it small, but some very large.

13,853. Has application been made to reduce the assessment?—I have appealed for about half the farms to the Assessment Committee and failed, and in one case I went to a higher tribunal, the Quarter Sessions, and I was beaten there, and had to pay 160*l.* costs.

13,854. Which case was that?—That was the case of Number 4 in Mr. Pringle's list. It was a farm of 345 acres, and the rent is 130*l.*, and the assessment is 238*l.*, and I got beaten; why I got beaten I cannot tell you.

13,855. What was contended on the other side?—It was contended that the valuation was fair compared with other farms. That was the only argument used. It was not contended that the farm was worth 238*l.*, but it was contended that other people were paying in the same sort of proportion, and therefore there was no reason for us to complain.

13,856. (*Viscount Cobham.*) And the whole was agricultural land?—Not the whole of it, but in the Union there is a great deal of property besides agricultural property.

13,857. (*Chairman.*) Would you say generally in these parishes that the assessment is higher than the rent?—I should say, in these particular unions nearly all the purely agricultural land the assessment is higher than the rent. In these 15 farms it comes out 50 per cent. higher than the rent.

13,858. And you failed altogether to get the assessment reduced?—Yes, I failed; very much so.

13,859. The result is that the rate in the pound is apparently very high?—The average rate in the pound, on the 15 farms is 6*s.* 8*d.*

13,860. In the case of farm number 1 the assessment is 52*l.* more than the rent?—Yes, that is an extreme case.

13,861. And the rate in the pound is 24*s.*?—Yes, that is a farm we have at 15*l.* a year rent.

13,862. What is the acreage?—265 acres. That 15*l.* is the actual rent. There is no estimate about that. It is a most extreme case.

13,863. Is that a farm in bad condition?—No, it was not let cheaply for that reason; it is simply a heavy land farm, and no one would have it. It adjoins another farm of ours, or I do not suppose that we should have taken it.

Prospects on heavy soils with falling prices.

13,864. What are your views as to the future of this district?—I think the heavy land of the district is hopeless if the present prices continue. It is all a question of price of farm produce.

13,865. I suppose all the farms have suffered during the last year on account of the extremely bad seasons?—No doubt; last year was specially bad.

13,866. I suppose the hot weather of last year has done good to the land?—As far as the heavy land is concerned, it is in very good order.

13,867. But the very low prices of wheat makes it difficult to know what to do with it?—You cannot possibly grow wheat at the present prices.

13,868. Can you substitute any other corn for wheat?—Then the other corn comes down equally.

13,869. Still the fall is not so heavy as in the case of wheat?—Not quite.

13,870. Will it grow barley and oats?—It will grow barley and oats, but it will grow wheat best. The fall in barley, of course, has been very great. At the present moment they will not buy Essex barley at all.

Price of fodder.

13,871. Do you buy much food for your cows?—Yes, on farms where cows are kept, there is an outlay of nearly 3*l.* an acre in bought food.

13,872. I suppose you have bought that at a great advantage with the low prices?—Yes, we are able to do so, but not all cow food, because brewers' grains, which are one of the chief products used, are very dear.

13,873. Are they exceptionally dear?—Exceptionally dear this year.

13,874. What is that due to?—Owing to the scarcity of food this winter. Brewers' grains are a bulky food and any food that is used as a substitute for hay and straw is dearer this year than the more condensed foods.

13,875. That is exceptional and due to this year only, generally speaking you have bought the food for cows at low prices, have you not?—Cheap, no doubt.

Rise in prices only remedy.

13,876. Have you any recommendations to make to the Commission?—No, I want better prices, that is the only thing that will make things right with us. Of course some small things, such as the relief of rates, charging highway rates not on land and house property only; and something might be done by bringing more pressure upon the railway companies to cheapen the rates.

13,877. But those do not amount to very much compared with the main difficulty, and that is the price?—That is so.

13,878. Still in your own case there seems a considerable margin of rent which you charge yourself from which to draw in the future?—Yes, rent does not do more than pay the interest on the buildings and drainage.

13,879. On buildings erected within recent times?—Within the last 30 years.

13,880. Then the true rent of the land has disappeared, practically?—Practically, except in favoured situations.

13,881. (*Viscount Cobham.*) If you charged management on the usual professional scale it would pretty well eat up half of the profits?—I think it would, it would bring it to nearly half.

System of dairying.

13,882. What number of cows do you keep?—About 500 shorthorn cows, and a few Jerseys, not many.

13,883. Do you keep any pure shorthorns?—Anything that will give milk.

13,884. Have you any special system of feeding them?—No, we do not feed them scientifically particularly. Everything is measured and weighed out and a certain limited quantity is given them every week, and the milk is measured once a week from each cow and an account is kept of what each cow gives.

Sale of milk.

13,885–6. Then as to the sale of milk, is it sold to a contractor or does any go to market?—It is all sold to contractors.

13,887. You are quite independent of the London markets?—It is sold for the year, or six months, or something of that sort.

Railway rates on milk.

13,888. I presume that owing to the large amount of milk which you send, you get a favourable railway rate?—We do not get anything special, it is the same as other people get.

13,889. The same as other people sending a large amount, I suppose?—The same as other people sending a small amount, we have no advantage over other people, we never could get any.

Scotch farmers in Essex.

13,890 As to the Scotch farmers, have they introduced dairy farming largely into Essex?—Yes, they are the chief cause of Essex becoming a dairy county.

13,891. How are they doing?—I think, on the whole—I have not personally much acquaintance with them—but on the whole the majority of them, I think, are making ends meet—just to keep things going. They are very careful, they spend nothing; they go on the principle of spending nothing.

13,892. They lay the land down to grass where they can?—Yes, they do the arable rather badly, but the grass pretty well, and their expenditure on labour as compared with the Essex farmer is about one-third.

13,893. Have they mostly remained?—The greater part of them.

13,894. Are they doing better than the Essex farmers?—Yes, undoubtedly. The old-fashioned Essex farmer, except an exceptional man, is gradually being ruined. The exceptional man has been able to keep on in the old way by his being able to do the best with everything, but the ordinary man is being gradually ruined.

13,895. He finds it difficult to adapt himself to new methods?—Yes.

13,896. (*Chairman.*) Are there exceptional cases of individuals making a profit?—I suppose certain individuals do better, but the same individuals in any other business would make larger profits. There are certain people who can always make profits.

Advantages of tenant farmer and occupying owner compared.

13,897. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You have the advantage of the ordinary run of farmers in the price you give for the various articles you have to buy?—I think in many ways we can manage quite as well as the ordinary farmer, rather better.

13,898. You buy on a larger scale, and your credit being better probably you pay less on that account?—Perhaps we do. The supervision of an ordinary farmer is much better than ours, and in the case of labour and things of that sort probably he is able to look into the details more.

Hon. E. G. Strutt.

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13,899. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) On the farm of 15*l.* rent what was the assessment?—67*l.*

Assessment to rates.

13,900. Your Assessment Committee does not regard rent as the basis of assessment then?—Quite so.

13,901. Why do they do that, because the rates would be so enormously high if they did not?—They say, Where are the rates to come from?

13,902. How do you make 8*s.* 6*d.* in the pound rate? —It is an error; it should be 6*s.* 8*d.* The way I got these figures was this: I took the rating in the pound upon each of those 15 farms, and I added them together, and divided by 15.

13,903. Did you take it on the urban, or was it entirely rural?—Entirely rural; there is no School Board in any of those districts.

13,904. And that makes it exceptionally high?—It is not that the rates are high, but the assessment is high. It is the assessment being so much higher than the value.

13,905. Is the tithe deducted from the assessment?—Yes, the tithe is rated by itself.

Large and small farmers compared

13,906. Have you small farms under you at all?—Yes.

13,907. Do you find that the tenants of those do better than the tenants of the larger ones?—I think they do.

13,908. Could you say why. Do they adopt a different system of cultivation?—On the whole they are able to do better.

13,909. Is it because they work themselves, and their families also?—I should think it was, and they are able to do a good deal themselves, and they work with the men, and see more of it.

13,910. Do they grow vegetables and fruit, or any small things of that kind?—Hardly any of them.

13,911. Still they do better?—Yes.

13,912. Of what size would such farms be?—These farms would be rather under 100 acres than over.

13,913. And they would keep cows on those smaller farms?—No, not much.

13,914. So that the cowing industry would not account for the greater success?—No.

13,915. It would only be because of the labour of the tenant and his family?—I should think so; and better looking after it.

Scotch farms in Essex.

13,916. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) When these Scotch farmers took their farms, did they get freedom as to the rotation, or working of the farm?—I think everybody in Essex is practically allowed to farm as he likes.

13,917. Was that a change when the bad times came on?—I think there has been more liberality in covenants since the bad times commenced, no doubt.

13,918. Then their neighbours have, to a large extent, copied the mode of the Scotch farmers?—I do not think so. The Essex farmers think that they farm very badly; the majority of them.

13,919. Is the Essex farmer rather inclined to continue on in his own way?—Yes.

13,920. Although with the changes he sees that his Scotch neighbours are paying their way?—He says that the Scotch farmer is ruining the land.

13,921. And is that idea likely to predominate over his own personal advantage to do pretty well for himself, rather than for his farm?—The average man does not believe much in change. He says that he tries the other things, and nothing comes of them.

Assessment to rates.

13,922. (*Mr. Dalton.*) This farm, where the rent is 15*l.*, and the assessment is 67*l.*, contains 265 acres?—Yes.

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13,923. Then the rent is about 1*s.* per acre?—Yes.

13,924. And the assessment 5*s.* per acre?—Yes, roughly.

13,925. Would 5*s.* an acre be a higher rent for that land than the other land in the parish is paying?—About the same.

13,926. Is not that the reason that the Assessment Committee have put them at the same assessment? They are bound to assume a hypothetical tenant who would take that farm?—This is an actual rent paid as a tenant, and has been going on for three or four years.

13,927. But the rest of the land would let at 5*s.* per acre?—Yes.

13,928. And therefore they put that assessment on these?—Each farm is separate; that is what they would maintain, but as a matter of fact, one farm is worth 5*s.*, or 10*s.*, or 15*s.*, and another only 1*s.*

13,929. But that would be their ground for assessing? —Well, I do not know; they would say that rates must come from somewhere.

13,930. But if it was not let at all, they would not charge rates for it, I suppose?—If it was in the landlord's hands they would.

13,931. Has that been a profitable farm at all, when taken at a rent of 1*s.* per acre?—No; it has been a loss.

13,932. Has that been the case with all the other ones?—Not every one of them in this list. I should think that there has been more loss on the larger number. This is all the worst land. But this list includes every farm in this union that I have to do with, every farm, except one farm, which has been hired on a lease of seven years, and it does not apply to the present situation.

Constitution of Assessment Committee.

13,933. Of whom did the assessment committee of this union mainly consist; are they men representing the urban district, or the rural districts?—They are mixed; fair representatives of rural and urban.

13,934. It is not that you have got a majority of urban representatives against you?—No.

13,935. It is alleged in some districts that that is the case?—I do not think that is so here.

Average rate in £ in the district.

13,936. Apart from this exceptionally high rate as compared with the rent, what is the average rate in the pound in these parishes?—I think the average rate is 4*s.*, assuming that the assessment is about right; that is roughly about it.

Effect of fall in prices on cultivation of land.

13,937. (*Mr. Everett.*) I suppose from what you have said that there is a great deal of land in Essex, that if you took the whole of the rates and taxes off it, would still be unprofitable to cultivate?—It would, probably, if one would cultivate it. It might be worth something as a sheep run.

13,938. And your opinion is, that if prices do not rise, and if, on the whole, they tend to go lower; then a great deal of Essex will go out of cultivation?—The three-horse land must go out of cultivation.

13,939. There was some went out in the period of low prices, just after free trade, was there not?—About 1851, I think, they were very bad in Essex. I do not remember it.

13,940. You do not happen to know that near to the River Crouch there was some land that then went out of cultivation. What has happened to that?—That is still abandoned now. I daresay it was cultivated between 1860 and 1870.

13,941. You cannot give any comfort as to any different method by which, without better prices, we can see our way back to prosperity in the eastern counties? —I think the only thing is to lay it down to grass.

13,942. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I suppose these poor lands have next to no sporting value?—Very little; they would make 6*d.* per acre, perhaps.

The witness withdrew.

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MR. EDWARD HARBORD LUSHINGTON (Treasurer of Guy's Hospital).

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Mr. JOHN COCKS (Farmer, Ernsettle, King's Tamerton, Plymouth).

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MR. ELIAS PITTS SQUAREY.

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MR. THOMAS PARKER (tenant farmer of Churton Hall, near Chester, and representative of the Cheshire Farmers' Club).

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MR. R. G. WYATT, tenant farmer, Whitestaunton, Chard, Somerset.

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APPENDIX A.

Appendix A., I. and II.

I.

STATEMENT of amount expended by the Crown upon Farms in charge of Sir Nigel Kingscote from 31st March 1879 to the 31st March 1893.

(*Handed in by Sir Nigel Kingscote. See Question* 40.)

Year to 31st March.	On Permanent Improvements. £ s. d.	On Repairs. £ s. d.	Total. £ s. d.
1880 - - - -	27,155 6 10	1,223 2 4	28,378 9 2
1881 - - - -	21,081 14 0	1,761 0 2	22,842 14 2
1882 - - -	16,723 10 4	2,862 0 3	19,585 10 7
1883 - - - -	16,322 7 7	2,801 1 4	19,123 8 11
1884 - - - -	24,931 4 1	4,766 10 7	29,697 14 8
1885 - - - -	23,459 6 5	4,099 12 5	27,558 18 10
1886 - - - -	19,079 5 9	2,140 8 9	21,219 14 6
1887 - . - -	19,568 10 7	1,485 0 3	21,053 10 10
1888 - - - -	13,024 15 1	2,520 7 1	15,545 2 2
1889 - - - -	7,045 14 6	2,469 0 0	9,514 14 6
1890 - - - -	6,955 12 9	2,515 18 2	9,471 10 11
1891 - - - -	6,294 12 2	1,932 16 1	8,227 8 3
1892 - - - -	9,700 10 8	3,116 9 8	12,817 0 4
1893 - - - -	9,247 8 11	2,732 19 2	11,980 8 1
£	220,589 19 8	36,426 6 3	257,016 5 11

II.

STATEMENT of the Agricultural Lands in England belonging to the Crown, showing, I., their Extent; II., the Rental for Year to 10th October 1892, and the authorised allowances therefrom, and the Tithe rentcharge included therein; and III., the Rents *received* in the Year to 31st March 1893, and the allowances made in that year, and the Tithe rentcharge paid in that year.

(*Handed in by Sir Nigel Kingscote. See Question* 70.)

I.—EXTENT:

	A.	R.	P.
Lands occupied by tenants at 10th October 1892:—			
Northern Counties - - - - - - - - - - -	21,503	0	23
Midland and Southern - - - - - - - - - -	46,317	1	16
Acres -	67,820	1	39
Land in hand at 10th October 1892:—			
Midland and Southern - - - - - - - - - -	1,676	2	24
Total acres -	69,497	0	23

II.—RENTAL:—

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Rental for year to 10th October 1892:—			
Northern Counties - - - - - - - - - - -			26,747 18 0
Southern and Midland - - - - - - - - - -			53,251 8 6
			79,999 6 6
Allowances and remissions authorised for year to 10th October 1892:—			
Northern Counties - - - - - - - -		470 0 0	
Southern and Midland - - - - - - - -		8,191 0 0	
		8,661 0 0	
Tithe rentcharge included in rental:—			
Northern Counties - - - - -	465 9 9		
Southern and Midland - - - -	4,030 1 6		
		4,495 11 3	
			13,156 11 3
Net Rental -			£66,842 15 3

Appendix A., II. and III.

III.—Receipts in year to 31st March 1893:—

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Rents received in year:—									
Northern Counties							26,177	15	7
Southern and Midland							51,184	7	2
							77,362	2	9
Allowances made:—									
Northern Counties				213	6	0			
Southern and Midland				7,431	1	1			
				7,644	7	1			
Tithe rentcharge paid:—									
Northern Counties	465	9	9						
Southern and Midland	3,984	15	2						
				4,450	4	11			
							12,094	12	0
Net Receipt							£65,267	10	9

III.

(*See* Questions 71, 157, 270.)

Sir Nigel Kingscote writes as follows:—

When I gave evidence before the Royal Commission on the 9th ultimo, I was asked if I could furnish a classified statement of the expenditure on certain typical Crown estates over a period of years particularly distinguishing the expenditure on buildings and on drainage. I was also asked to supply a statement showing, for a moderate period, the approximate net income derived from a certain number of Crown estates which would be available for payment into the Exchequer.

For each of these returns, I have selected six of the principal Crown estates situate in various parts of the country, viz., at Stagsden in Bedfordshire, Hainault in Essex, Billingborough in Lincolnshire, Bishop's Cannings and Bromham near Devizes in Wilts, and Sunk Island and Boroughbridge in Yorkshire. I now hand in the returns I have been asked for in respect of these estates.

The return as to outlay in repairs and improvements I have carried back to the year 1867 (or, where the estate was purchased since, to the date of purchase), because that year was the first in which the outlay on permanent improvements is separated from other works of repair, the Act authorising the payment of that outlay temporarily out of capital having been passed in 1866.

I should explain that, in the Return of the approximate net income, I have not charged any of the expenses of maintaining my office. It would be very difficult indeed to arrive at any opinion as to the proportion of that cost, which would be properly charged to these estates, and a good deal of the cost probably would only represent the time and attention which a private landowner would devote to the management of similar estates.

I was also asked to endeavour to ascertain the amounts at which the farms now in hand were assessed in 1879, and those at which they are now assessed, and I now hand in a return giving those amounts as nearly as I have been able to ascertain them.

NIGEL KINGSCOTE.

14th December 1893.

(*See* next page for return.)

RETURN showing approximately the Net Revenue derived from certain Crown Agricultural Estates, viz., at Stagsden, Bedfordshire; Hainault and Stapleford-Abbots in Essex; Billingboro', Lincolnshire; Bishops Cannings and Bromham, Wiltshire; and Sunk Island and Boroughbridge, Yorkshire, for the six years, 1888 to 1893, both inclusive.

N.B.—Prior to the passing of the Tithe Act, 1891, Tithe Rentcharge where payable was paid by the Crown Tenants direct. Since the passing of that Act it has been paid by the Crown, subject to the provisions of the Act.

STAGSDEN ESTATE, Co. BEDS.

This Estate was purchased in 1874, and shortly afterwards a considerable outlay was made in permanent improvements, which ought rather to be regarded as part of the purchase money and not as part of the outlay now being repaid out of Income.

Year to 31st March.	Acreage.	Rental.	Receipts.	Deductions and Outlay.								Net Receipt *or the Reverse.*
				Allowances made to Tenants.	Agency.*	Tithe Rent-charge, Rates and Taxes paid or allowed by the Crown.	Repairs, &c. paid out of Income.	Charge in respect of Permanent Improvements, being a part of Outlay in previous Years.	Excess of Receipt over Expenditure *or the Reverse* on Farms in Hand.	Miscellaneous Expenditure.	Total Deductions and Outlay.	
	a. r. p.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1888 - - - -	3,362 2 11	2,137 5 8	2,203 2 9	478 15 0	123 3 11	111 19 3	248 7 10	1,350 6 9	*203 14 0*	48 15 6	2,565 2 3	*361 19 6*
1889 - - - -	3,362 2 11	2,192 5 9	2,399 14 8	395 0 0	127 2 3	86 2 0	229 7 1	1,406 3 5	455 11 6	41 6 10	2,285 1 7	570 4 7
1890 - - - -	3,362 2 11	2,188 17 9	2,692 6 7	555 3 0	148 10 9	79 8 10	6 0 11	1.407 0 7	195 2 0	44 9 7	2,240 13 8	646 14 11
1891 - - - -	3,362 2 11	2,184 15 6	2,412 6 9	188 4 4	143 1 3	87 14 0	18 8 3	1,407 0 7	*213 18 3*	58 13 2	2,116 19 10	295 6 11
1892 - - - -	3,362 2 11	2,764 19 6	2,781 14 1	285 12 3	153 10 8	659 3 1	111 15 0	1,416 10 11	264 2 11	51 3 2	2,677 15 1	368 1 11
1893 - - - -	3,362 2 11	2,753 4 11	2,679 3 6	480 0 0	140 4 4	662 19 9	14 13 0	1,416 10 11	*262 18 1*	49 8 4	3,026 14 5	*347 10 11*
		14,221 9 1	15,168 8 4	2,382 14 7	835 13 2	1,687 6 11	628 12 1	8,403 13 2	*680 10 4* 914 16 5	293 16 7	14,912 6 10	1,880 8 4 *709 10 5*
											Net receipt -	1,170 17 11
HAINAULT AND STAPLEFORD ABBOTS ESTATES, Co. ESSEX.												
	a. r. p.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1888 - - - -	4,015 0 0	5,780 18 0	5,714 17 9	—	238 11 7	188 2 2	—	909 9 0	—	7 17 0	1,343 19 9	4,370 18 0
1889 - - - -	4,015 0 0	5,781 15 6	5,718 15 3	55 0 0	226 10 11	164 4 1	—	932 2 7	—	3 4 7	1,381 2 2	4,337 13 1
1890 - - - -	4,015 0 0	5,691 2 3	5,768 3 3	295 0 0	222 7 0	162 4 11	—	964 13 11	—	16 12 1	1,660 17 11	4,107 5 4
1891 - - - -	4,011 3 20	4,916 11 0	5,088 0 0	305 0 0	144 11 11	92 0 10	—	975 12 3	—	19 4 9	1,536 9 7	3,551 10 5
1892 - - - -	4,012 0 20	5,802 5 10	6,464 13 7	308 0 0	161 13 3	494 3 8	962 18 5	998 2 6	—	3 4 9	2,928 2 7	3,536 11 0
1893 - - - -	4,014 0 15	5,832 4 2	6,242 18 6	799 6 10	163 6 1	498 12 5	494 2 8	1,061 13 0	—	3 4 9	3,020 5 9	3,222 12 9
		33,804 16 9	34,997 8 4	1,762 6 10	1,157 0 9	1,599 8 1	1,457 1 1	5,841 13 3	—	53 17 11	11,870 17 9	23,126 10 7

* N.B.—Where a farm has been in hand a special fee for supervising the work on such farm while in hand is included under this head.

Appendix A., III.

Return showing approximately the Net Revenue derived from certain Crown Agricultural Estates—*continued*.

BILLINGBORO' ESTATE, Co. LINCOLN.

(Only a very small area subject to Tithe.)

Year to 31st March.	Acreage.	Rental.	Receipts.	Deductions and Outlay.								Net Receipt *or the reverse.*
				Allowances made to Tenants.	Agency.	Tithe Rent-charge, Rates and Taxes paid or allowed by the Crown.	Repairs, &c. paid out of Income.	Charge in respect of permanent Improvements, being 1/30 part of Outlay in previous years.	Excess of Receipt over Expenditure, *or the reverse* on Farms in Hand.	Miscellaneous Expenditure.	Total Deductions and Outlay.	
	a. r. p.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1888 - - - -	4,017 2 18	5,351 10 11	5,345 10 5	898 18 2	189 6 9	127 6 5	88 19 0	987 18 7	*94 11 4*	—	2,387 0 3	2,958 10 2
1889 - - - -	4,017 2 18	5,376 0 2	5,410 2 0	482 0 0	220 14 3	111 13 7	83 17 3	1,022 15 6	33 11 0	0 10 6	1,921 11 5	3,522 1 7
1890 - - - -	4,017 1 18	5,560 16 10	5,638 11 9	868 15 0	208 4 8	206 18 1	364 9 9	1,097 14 1	—	—	2,746 1 7	2,892 10 2
1891 - - - -	4,017 1 18	5,424 16 10	6,367 0 6	781 5 0	202 7 4	112 12 6	317 6 5	1,156 14 4	—	101 7 6	2,671 13 1	3,695 7 5
1892 - - - -	4,017 1 18	5,073 4 3	5,220 5 11	420 4 11	174 4 0	135 2 3	81 18 2	1,193 17 9	—	123 14 3	2,129 1 4	3,091 4 7
1893 - - - -	4,017 0 38	5,076 1 4	5,076 1 4	1,191 9 5	125 17 9	128 0 2	510 18 1	1,207 9 6	—	30 0 0	3,193 14 11	1,882 6 5
		31,862 10 4	33,057 11 11	4,642 12 6	1,120 14 9	821 13 0	1,447 8 8	6,666 9 9	{ *94 11 4* { 33 11 0	255 12 3	15,049 2 7	18,042 0 4
BISHOPS CANNINGS AND BROMHAM ESTATES, Co. WILTS.												
	a. r. p.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1888 - - - -	8,879 2 4	5,923 17 11	7,766 2 5	1,100 0 0	302 5 9	203 4 3	229 1 1	1,413 2 7	—	0 8 9	3,248 2 5	4,518 0 0
1889 - - - -	8,915 3 34	6,002 15 6	6,061 16 5	165 0 0	266 17 1	233 4 9	249 2 8	1,486 8 2	—	7 10 6	2,408 3 2	3,653 13 3
1890 - - - -	8,925 3 21	6,043 5 3	6,056 17 0	47 10 0	288 7 11	165 13 6	178 5 0	1,503 10 11	—	11 19 10	2,195 7 2	3,861 9 10
1891 - - - -	8,925 3 21	6,025 10 2	6,294 16 3	302 10 0	269 13 9	157 1 2	622 11 1	1,506 2 11	—	28 8 6	2,886 7 5	3,408 8 10
1892 - - - -	8,926 0 5	6,330 18 8	6,330 5 2	100 0 0	217 4 9	590 7 5	427 5 9	1,548 5 3	—	—	2,883 3 2	3,447 2 0
1893 - - - -	8,924 3 3	6,333 8 5	6,422 16 10	1,792 0 0	212 10 6	581 9 1	108 17 3	1,511 19 3	—	—	4,206 16 1	2,216 0 9
		36,659 15 11	38,932 14 1	3,507 0 0	1,556 19 9	1,931 0 2	1,815 2 10	8,969 9 1	—	48 7 7	17,827 19 5	21,104 14 8

Return showing approximately the Net Revenue derived from certain Crown Agricultural Estates—*continued.*

SUNK ISLAND, Co. YORK.

There is no Tithe-rent or Land Tax charged upon this Estate, which was relet in 1885.

Year to 31st March.	Acreage.	Rental.	Receipts.	Deductions and Outlay.								Net Receipt *or the Reverse.*
				Allowances made to Tenants.	Agency.	Tithe Rent-charge, Rates and Taxes paid or allowed by the Crown.	Repairs, &c. paid out of Income.	Charge in respect of permanent Improvements, being $\frac{1}{15}$ part of Outlay in previous Years.	Excess of Receipt over Expenditure, *or the Reverse* on Farms in Hand.	Miscellaneous Expenditure.	Total Deductions and Outlay.	
	a. r. p.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1888 - - - -	6,599 3 17	9,656 6 10	9,498 0 4	—	256 1 11	303 13 2	145 10 1	870 6 3	No Farms in hand during this period.	—	1,575 11 5	7,922 8 11
1889 - - - -		9,656 12 6	9,864 3 6	—	259 14 1	287 11 6	108 15 9	886 13 11		—	1,542 15 3	8,321 8 3
1890 - - - -		9,692 0 4	9,556 2 2	—	252 9 9	247 14 0	100 13 0	923 12 3		—	1,524 9 0	8,031 13 2
1891 - - - -		9,713 5 1	*11,072 2 5	—	290 10 2	277 13 11	332 14 0	941 15 6		—	1,842 13 7	9,229 8 10
1892 - - - -		9,719 8 8	9,976 18 0	205 16 4 Arrear discharged	259 5 6	242 3 7	587 13 10	941 15 6		—	2,236 19 9	7,739 18 3
1893 - - - -		9,720 7 0	9,777 19 10	—	262 4 9	242 13 2	205 17 11	950 8 11		—	1,661 4 9	8,116 15 1
		58,158 0 5	59,745 6 3	205 16 4	1,580 6 2	1,601 9 4	1,481 9 7	5,514 12 4	—	—	10,383 13 9	49,361 12 6

BOROUGHBRIDGE, Co. YORK.

There is no Land Tax charged upon the Estate, and the Estate is practically Tithe free.

Year to 31st March.	Acreage.	Rental.	Receipts.	Allowances made to Tenants.	Agency.	Tithe Rent-charge, Rates and Taxes paid or allowed by the Crown.	Repairs, &c. paid out of Income.	Charge in respect of permanent Improvements, being $\frac{1}{15}$ part of Outlay in previous Years.	Excess of Receipt over Expenditure, *or the Reverse* on Farms in Hand.	Miscellaneous Expenditure.	Total Deductions and Outlay.	Net Receipt *or the Reverse.*
	a. r. p.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1888 - - - -	3,345 0 19	4,670 11 11	4,743 8 4	—	199 6 2	150 12 0	66 14 0	417 7 1	No Farm in Hand during this period.	—	833 19 3	3,909 9 1
1889 - - - -		4,670 11 11	4,655 5 7	—	195 15 2	136 2 3	21 12 4	417 7 1		1 12 9	772 9 7	3,882 16 0
1890 - - - -		4,675 0 9	4,690 7 0	—	196 1 11	116 14 2	7 12 3	426 18 7		0 16 5	748 3 4	3,942 3 8
1891 - - - -		4,284 19 0	4,284 19 0	—	184 19 5	111 18 8	13 14 9	427 0 4		0 16 5	738 9 7	3,546 9 5
1892 - - - -		4,290 14 5	4,290 14 5	—	179 12 0	107 0 8	—	434 3 5		0 16 5	721 12 6	3,569 1 11
1893 - - - -		4,303 3 9	4,303 3 9	—	181 13 0	107 6 5	54 10 0	455 19 9		0 16 5	800 5 7	3,502 18 2
		26,895 1 9	26,967 18 1	—	1,137 7 8	729 14 2	164 3 4	2,578 16 3	—	4 18 5	4,614 19 10	22,352 18 3

* Several large arrears paid off this year.

Appendix A., III.

RETURN of total Expenditure by the Crown in Repairs and Improvements on certain Crown Agricultural Estates, viz., at Stagsden, Bedfordshire; Hainault and Stapleford-Abbots, Essex; Billingboro', Lincolnshire; Bishops Cannings and Bromham, Wiltshire; and Sunk Island and Boroughbridge, Yorkshire; 1867 to 1893.

STAGSDEN ESTATE, CO. BEDS (Estate purchased in 1874).

Year to 31st March.	Ordinary Repairs, &c. and Works not chargeable as permanent Improvements.	Permanent Improvements advanced temporarily out of Capital and repaid from Income in 25 years in accordance with the Crown Lands Act, 1866.				Total Outlay in Repairs and Improvements.
		Drainage.	New Buildings, and Improvement of Buildings.	Water Supply, Fencing, &c.	Total Expenditure on permanent Improvements.	
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1867	—	—	—	—	—	—
1868	—	—	—	—	—	—
1869	—	—	—	—	—	—
1870	—	—	—	—	—	—
1871	—	—	—	—	—	—
1872	—	—	—	—	—	—
1873	—	—	—	—	—	—
1874	—	—	—	—	—	—
1875	8 9 3	238 18 4	—	—	238 18 4	247 7 7
1876	22 8 5	1,776 18 6	1,550 0 0	—	3,326 18 6	3,349 6 11
1877	17 7 3	870 14 9	3,675 19 11	82 12 2	4,629 6 10	4,646 14 1
1878	5 18 6	653 0 10	5,129 14 3	200 0 0	5,982 15 1	5,988 13 7
1879	23 18 0	283 2 7	2,806 9 5	—	2,589 12 0	2,613 10 0
1880	51 17 7	30 18 0	2,829 4 7	163 16 10	3,023 19 5	3,075 17 0
1881	2 10 6	484 16 9	934 19 2	—	1,419 15 11	1,422 6 5
1882	238 19 7	1,377 15 1	1,009 10 0	—	2,387 5 1	2,626 4 8
1883	274 3 3	646 13 5	526 1 5	—	1,172 14 10	1,446 18 1
1884	88 10 8	942 4 3	856 16 0	—	1,799 0 3	1,887 10 11
1885	153 3 11	1,604 13 0	569 7 0	19 8 3	2,193 8 3	2,346 12 2
1886	205 16 6	1,750 10 1	—	26 16 1	1,777 6 2	1,983 2 8
1887	90 6 10	784 6 0	2,433 3 0	—	3,217 9 0	3,307 15 10
1888	248 7 10	317 12 6	1,072 4 0	5 19 6	1,395 16 0	1,644 3 10
1889	229 7 1	21 8 8	—	—	21 8 8	250 15 9
1890	6 0 11	—	—	—	—	6 0 11
1891	18 8 3	—	233 4 5	4 14 0	237 18 5	256 6 8
1892	111 15 0	—	—	—	—	111 15 0
1893	14 13 0	19 4 1	350 10 0	—	369 14 1	384 7 1
	1,812 2 4	11,802 16 10	23,477 8 2	503 6 10	35,783 6 10	37,595 9 2

Note.—The outlay in permanent improvements, which was made during the first few years after the purchase of this estate, ought rather to be regarded as part of the purchase money, and not as expenditure to be repaid out of income.

HAINAULT AND STAPLEFORD ABBOTS ESTATES, CO. ESSEX.

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1867	—	—	—	46 13 8	46 13 8	46 13 8
1868	—	—	—	—	—	—
1869	300 0 0	—	350 0 0	—	350 0 0	650 0 0
1870	201 6 6	—	1,419 3 2	—	1,419 3 2	1,620 9 8
1871	4 5 0	500 10 4	56 10 0	—	557 0 4	561 5 4
1872	53 7 9	—	2,079 3 1	19 7 8	2,098 10 9	2,151 18 6
1873	—	—	1,392 19 6	—	1,392 19 6	1,392 19 6
1874	—	—	11 17 3	—	11 17 3	11 17 3
1875	—	333 19 3	—	—	333 19 3	333 19 3
1876	3 6 6	187 12 11	—	—	187 12 11	190 19 5
1877	—	—	—	—	—	—
1878	—	—	—	—	—	—
1879	—	—	—	—	—	—
1880	—	332 1 0	122 10 0	—	454 11 0	454 11 0
1881	—	4,750 6 7	2,410 12 3	54 2 7	7,215 1 5	7,215 1 5
1882	138 11 0	2,616 19 2	371 7 7	—	2,988 6 9	3,126 17 9
1883	5 1 5	692 3 7	252 10 6	—	944 14 1	949 15 6
1884	751 8 0	100 3 3	1,825 0 0	—	1,425 3 3	2,176 11 8
1885	552 7 3	739 15 1	1,845 19 10	—	2,585 14 11	3,138 2 2
1886	19 0 0	221 12 11	399 18 1	—	621 11 0	640 11 0
1887	2,000 0 0	8 5 6	—	95 0 0	103 5 6	2,103 5 6
1888	—	—	546 18 5	20 2 3	567 0 8	567 0 8
1889	—	—	711 19 11	102 2 11	814 2 10	814 2 10
1890	—	—	172 17 0	100 0 0	272 17 0	272 17 0
1891	—	218 5 7	342 18 6	1 13 6	562 17 7	562 17 7
1892	962 18 5	—	1,450 11 2	184 3 9	1,634 14 11	2,597 13 4
1893	494 2 8	261 0 0	380 16 11	12 5 2	654 2 1	1,148 4 9
	5,485 14 6	10,962 15 2	15,643 13 2	635 11 6	27,241 19 10	32,727 14 4

BILLINGBORO' ESTATE, CO. LINCOLN.

Year to 31st March.	Ordinary Repairs, &c. and Works not chargeable as permanent Improvements.	Permanent Improvements advanced temporarily out of Capital and repaid from Income in 25 years in accordance with the Crown Lands Act, 1866.				Total Outlay in Repairs and Improvements.
		Drainage.	New Buildings and Improvement of Buildings.	Water Supply, Fencing, &c.	Total Expenditure on permanent Improvements.	
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1867	27 9 6	5 5 0	—	—	5 5 0	82 14 6
1868	12 0 0	—	666 9 7	—	666 9 7	678 9 7
1869	15 2 0	20 0 0	56 0 8	—	76 0 8	91 2 8
1870	12 13 0	—	260 0 0	—	260 0 0	272 13 0
1871	15 1 6	640 9 0	61 1 11	—	701 10 11	716 12 5
1872	12 0 0	—	—	—	—	12 0 0
1873	12 0 0	30 0 0	—	—	30 0 0	42 0 0
1874	24 13 1	82 19 6	—	—	82 19 6	107 12 7
1875	53 9 0	—	—	—	—	53 9 0
1876	83 19 0	—	—	—	—	83 19 0
1877	—	—	4,411 13 4	—	4,411 13 4	4,411 13 4
1878	—	—	2,054 18 0	—	2,054 18 0	2,054 18 0
1879	97 17 2	—	2,300 3 2	—	2,300 3 2	2,398 0 4
1880	—	—	1,618 15 8	—	1,618 15 8	1,618 15 8
1881	—	67 0 0	372 6 9	—	439 6 9	439 6 9
1882	643 17 0	394 0 11	450 0 0	—	844 0 11	1,487 17 11
1883	86 8 6	—	508 7 4	—	508 7 4	594 15 10
1884	38 11 0	37 1 9	818 16 8	—	855 18 5	894 9 5
1885	55 0 0	2,099 9 5	1,401 17 2	5 7 6	3,506 14 1	3,561 14 1
1886	5 5 3	3,055 5 3	159 1 5	—	3,214 6 8	3,219 11 11
1887	409 0 10	2,843 10 7	—	278 3 0	3,121 13 7	3,530 14 5
1888	88 19 0	535 6 8	208 6 9	127 10 2	871 3 7	960 2 7
1889	83 17 3	—	1,052 18 7	820 5 9	1,873 4 4	1,957 1 7
1890	364 9 9	1,217 17 7	244 0 1	13 9 0	1,475 6 8	1,839 16 5
1891	317 6 5	577 9 11	205 12 7	146 3 4	929 5 10	1,246 12 3
1892	81 18 2	—	179 0 0	165 19 4	344 19 4	426 17 6
1893	510 18 1	—	117 18 9	10 5 0	128 3 9	639 1 10
	3,051 15 6	11,605 15 7	17,147 8 5	1,567 3 1	30,320 7 1	33,372 2 7

BISHOP'S CANNINGS AND BROMHAM ESTATES, CO. WILTS.

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1867	1,289 19 4	—	1,862 17 6	—	1,862 17 6	3,152 16 10
1868	1,101 1 1	—	1,075 0 0	—	1,075 0 0	2,176 1 1
1869	66 10 3	—	84 10 1	—	84 10 1	151 0 4
1870	86 1 11	14 6 3	443 2 0	180 15 9	638 4 0	724 5 11
1871	35 10 6	9 0 7	356 2 1	7 5 0	372 7 8	407 18 2
1872	97 3 6	—	64 7 1	13 8 0	77 15 1	174 18 7
1873	53 10 5	—	952 5 10	—	952 5 10	1,005 16 3
1874	37 7 7	—	451 0 2	—	451 0 2	488 7 9
1875	40 18 9	5 5 0	767 2 6	—	772 7 6	813 6 3
1876	36 18 0	—	302 3 6	—	302 3 6	339 1 6
1877	83 1 0	—	—	—	—	83 1 0
1878	153 3 7	—	87 19 6	—	87 19 6	241 3 1
1879	124 1 10	—	682 17 2	—	682 17 2	806 19 0
1880	89 9 3	43 17 5	812 9 6	—	856 6 11	945 16 2
1881	540 2 11	535 16 7	1,104 13 7	12 10 0	1,653 0 2	2,193 3 1
1882	991 0 9	26 11 4	989 0 11	450 0 0	1,465 12 3	2,456 13 0
1883	824 14 0	—	4,498 3 2	—	4,498 3 2	5,322 17 2
1884	1,921 18 0	708 9 3	6,829 3 9	—	7,537 13 0	9,459 11 0
1885	828 9 0	49 13 9	4,966 15 11	—	5,016 9 8	5,844 18 8
1886	844 18 3	—	2,512 14 1	—	2,512 14 1	3,357 12 4
1887	220 10 2	23 10 0	4,405 8 2	—	4,428 18 2	4,649 8 4
1888	229 1 1	—	1,605 9 0	226 10 3	1,831 19 3	2,061 0 4
1889	249 2 8	—	166 3 11	262 3 8	428 7 7	677 10 3
1890	178 5 0	—	—	65 0 0	65 0 0	243 5 0
1891	622 11 1	—	889 6 9	163 12 10	1,052 19 7	1,675 10 8
1892	427 5 9	—	670 3 9	285 3 6	955 7 3	1,382 13 0
1893	108 17 3	—	420 5 9	160 6 9	580 12 6	689 9 9
	11,281 12 11	1,416 10 2	36,999 5 8	18,826 15 9	40,242 11 7	51,524 4 6

Appendix A., III.

SUNK ISLAND, CO. YORK.

Year to 31st March.	Ordinary Repairs, &c. and Works not chargeable as permanent Improvements.	Permanent Improvements advanced temporarily out of Capital and repaid from Income in 25 years in accordance with the Crown Lands Act, 1866.				Total Outlay in Repairs and Improvements.
		Drainage.	New Buildings and Improvement of Buildings.	Water Supply, Fencing, &c.	Total Expenditure on permanent Improvements.	
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1867	1,759 7 10	—	0 10 0	250 0 0	250 10 0	2,009 17 10
1868	760 2 0	—	—	386 2 4	386 2 4	1,146 4 4
1869	143 8 9	—	—	242 3 0	242 3 0	385 11 9
1870	114 7 6	202 14 11	388 18 0	—	591 12 11	706 0 5
1871	208 15 0	221 0 8	28 16 0	421 17 0	671 13 8	880 8 8
1872	114 7 6	—	—	—	—	114 7 6
1873	114 7 6	—	—	—	—	114 7 6
1874	1 10 0	—	—	—	—	1 10 0
1875	185 5 0	—	600 0 0	—	600 0 0	785 5 0
1876	121 4 0	—	1,100 0 0	782 10 1	1,882 10 1	2,003 14 1
1877	385 1 9	—	2,232 2 5	816 9 5	3,048 11 10	3,433 13 7
1878	1 10 0	—	3,082 13 11	559 11 4	3,642 5 3	3,643 15 3
1879	12 0 0	—	454 7 6	297 2 11	751 10 5	763 10 5
1880	1 10 0	—	98 7 4	—	98 7 4	99 17 4
1881	1 10 0	—	165 12 3	—	165 12 3	167 2 3
1882	159 2 0	174 0 11	—	—	174 0 11	333 2 11
1883	1 10 0	3,197 16 4	—	—	3,197 16 4	3,199 6 4
1884	282 15 3	3,129 13 3	315 0 0	—	3,444 13 3	3,727 8 6
1885	58 8 9	1,137 12 9	200 0 0	—	1,337 12 9	1,396 1 6
1886	—	225 13 3	499 4 0	—	724 17 3	724 17 3
1887	2 10 0	285 6 7	262 10 0	—	547 16 7	550 6 7
1888	145 10 1	281 7 10	68 5 0	60 0 0	409 12 10	555 2 11
1889	108 15 9	8 12 2	834 13 0	79 12 5	922 17 7	1,031 13 4
1890	100 13 0	163 19 5	286 7 9	3 15 10	454 3 0	554 16 0
1891	332 14 0	—	—	—	—	332 14 0
1892	587 18 10	56 16 2	—	410 7 3	467 3 5	1,055 2 3
1893	205 17 11	—	180 0 0	205 6 7	385 6 7	591 4 6
	5,910 2 5	9,084 14 3	10,797 7 2	4,514 18 2	24,396 19 7	30,307 2 0

N.B.—In the case of this estate a considerable expenditure has at times to be incurred in repairs to the bank against the River Humber.

BOROUGHBRIDGE, CO. YORK.

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1867	14 16 0	—	85 10 0	—	85 10 0	100 6 0
1868	14 9 11	152 5 0	4 5 6	—	156 10 6	171 0 5
1869	—	456 16 1	—	—	456 16 1	456 16 1
1870	83 4 4	—	—	—	—	83 4 4
1871	131 15 6	—	—	—	—	131 15 6
1872	10 0 0	532 19 11	—	234 7 0	767 6 11	777 6 11
1873	—	320 0 10	—	—	320 0 10	320 0 10
1874	—	645 5 7	—	—	645 5 7	645 5 7
1875	—	9 4 0	—	—	9 4 0	9 4 0
1876	—	—	—	19 16 6	19 16 6	19 16 6
1877	5 8 0	—	—	8 5 0	8 5 0	13 13 0
1878	12 0 0	185 8 4	933 19 2	47 15 0	1,167 2 6	1,179 2 6
1879	121 18 3	408 1 7	2,577 5 5	—	2,985 7 0	3,107 5 3
1880	—	145 5 6	717 5 9	97 17 6	960 8 9	960 8 9
1881	—	493 19 9	—	—	493 19 9	493 19 9
1882	20 13 6	—	183 15 0	—	183 15 0	204 8 6
1883	384 2 0	549 6 9	10 13 6	21 0 0	581 0 3	965 2 3
1884	37 13 11	143 10 6	445 9 2	—	588 19 8	626 13 7
1885	267 14 5	486 5 6	24 15 0	—	511 0 6	778 14 11
1886	55 3 0	—	470 2 0	—	470 2 0	525 5 0
1887	23 3 4	—	23 7 0	—	23 7 0	46 10 4
1888	66 14 0	—	—	—	—	66 14 0
1889	21 12 4	47 1 8	192 6 0	—	239 7 8	261 0 0
1890	7 12 3	—	2 4 3	—	2 4 3	9 16 6
1891	13 14 9	—	117 16 6	61 0 0	178 16 6	192 11 3
1892	—	—	457 5 5	173 12 0	630 17 5	630 17 5
1893	54 10 0	—	305 12 10	—	305 12 10	360 2 10
	1,346 5 6	4,575 11 0	6,551 12 6	663 13 0	11,790 16 6	13,137 2 0

Appendix A., III.

Return showing the Amounts at which the Farms and Land now in hand were assessed for Local Rates in the Years 1879 and 1893.

County.	Estate.	Farm, &c.	Acreage.			Assessment for Local Rates.					
						1879.			1893.		
			a.	r.	p.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Beds	Stagsden	Wick End Farm	323	2	36½	225	0	0	164	19	0
Kent	Isle of Sheppey	Grass Land	207	0	20	Cannot be ascertained.			121	0	0
Lincoln	Wingland	„	357	0	25	576	0	0	300	0	0
Oxford	Winchwood	High Lodge Farm	538	1	31	648	15	9	250	0	0
„	„	Potter Hill Farm	489	3	39	707	18	8	801	11	0
Suffolk	Shimpling	Shimpling Park and Green Tree Farm.	572	0	31	441	5	0	234	15	0

Appendix A.,
IV.

IV.

SCHEDULE of Agricultural Estates that belonged to the Crown at 31st March 1879 and belonging to the Crown at the close of the financial Year 1892–93, showing the rents and acreage of each Estate and the amount realised by the Sale of part of any such Estate, and the amount expended in the purchase of any additional land; also the amount expended in repairs and improvements on those Estates between those dates.

(*Handed in by Sir Nigel Kingscote. See Question* 36.)

Estates which are principally Building Estates are not included in this Schedule, even though they comprise some Agricultural Land, &c.

N.B.—This statement does not show temporary allowances which were made from the rentals for both 1879 and 1892. The 1892 rental includes the Tithe rentcharge paid by the Crown, the amount of which is shown in *italics*.

Situation.	At 31st March 1879.		Sales.		Purchases.		Expenditure on Repairs and Improvements.	At 31st March 1893.		Observations.
	Acreage.	Rental.	Acreage.	Amount realised.	Acreage.	Amount of Purchase Money.		Acreage.	Rental, including *Tithe Rent-charge.*	
	A. R. P.	£ s. d.	A. R. P.	£ s. d.	A. R. P.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	A. R. P.	£ s. d.	
BEDS:										
Stagsden	3,362 2 11	4,552 6 7	—	—	—	—	20,749 17 0	(*a*)3,362 2 11	2,753 4 11 *598 10 8*	(*a*) This acreage includes Wick End Farm.—323 A. 2 R. 36½ P. in hand.
BUCKS:										
Eton	(*a*)226 2 30	506 11 10	0 2 0	Free grant for school.	—	—	—	(*a*)226 1 3	493 15 2 *67 9 10*	(*a*) This includes 5 A. 1 R. 37 P. let for building at a rent of 50*l.* and several plots let for accommodation purposes.
CAMBRIDGE:										
Burwell	878 0 38	1,490 0 9	8 2 30	868 15 0	26 2 31	1,215 0 0	3,888 6 5	896 1 32	1,277 14 2 *219 7 0*	
CHESTER:										
Delamere	2,450 0 30	2,754 16 6	4 1 13¼	960 6	—	—	11,676 13 10	2,494 0 11	2,396 18 1	About 24 acres more woodland have been taken for cultivation since 1879, and the remainder of the increase is the result of a re-survey.
DORSET:										
Portland	240 0 31	274 0 0	—	—	—	--	—	247 3 39	299 4 1 *29 11 7*	
ESSEX:										
Hainault	3,474 3 32	7,889 4 10	10 0 18	2,956 5 0	10 3 26	758 0 0	22,067 4 7	35 3 0	(*a*)5,224 11 9 *269 4 11*	(*a*) Part of this rental is derived from three houses let under a building agreement at rents amounting to 13*l.* a year, and other part from the letting of a residence, and about 59 acres let at a rent of 267*l.* 10*s.*
Stapleford Abbotts	729 1 5	939 12 4	190 3 30	5,900 0 0	—	—	3,700 7 2	538 1 15	607 12 5 *111 2 0*	
Jotman's Hall Farm	234 1 12	200 0 0	234 1 12	2,250 0 0	—	—	216 4 4	—	—	An escheat.
GLOUCESTER:										
Hagloe	828 1 10¾	2,067 10 0	—	—	—	—	9,524 15 4	828 0 19¾	*1,143 1 1 *134 10 1*	* *This is exclusive of long leaseholds.*
HUNTS:										
Great Staughton	1,058 2 31	1,546 19 11	—	—	—	—	5,846 8 6	1,058 2 31	750 10	

SCHEDULE of Agricultural Estates—*continued.*

Situation.	At 31st March 1879.		Sales.		Purchases.		Expenditure on Repairs and Improvements.	At 31st March 1893.		Observations.
	Acreage.	Rental.	Acreage.	Amount realised.	Acreage.	Amount of Purchase Money.		Acreage.	Rental, including *Tithe Rent-charge.*	
	A. R. P.	£ *s.* *d.*	A. R. P.	£ *s.* *d.*	A. R. P.	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	A. R. P.	£ *s.* *d.*	
KENT:										
Neats Court	2,362 1 20	3,840 18 7	—	—	133 3 39	5,950 0 0	4,204 2 0	(*a*)2,496 1 19	1,978 12 3 *298 5 10*	(*a*) Marsh land containing 207 A. 0 R. 20 P. is in hand.
LANCASTER:										
Aldingham	1,226 2 24	2,038 9 0	—	—	109 0 18	8,350 0 0	4,256 5 5	1,335 0 2	2,191 18 7 *268 15 10*	
LINCOLN:										
Billingborough	3,960 3 32	8,741 1 4	(*a*) 6 2 15	(*a*)705 0 0	2 2 28	965 0 0	22,425 0 8	4,017 0 38	5,076 1 4	(*a*) These figures include 20 P. agreed to be sold for 5*l.* as a site for a church; the conveyance is not yet completed, but the purchase money has been paid.
Croft	211 1 3½	473 4 2	—	—	—	—	455 15 5	211 1 3½	336 1 6 *37 17 4*	
Gedney	698 2 20	1,550 2 6	—	—	—	—	4,763 7 9	698 2 20	948 11 11 *136 16 7*	
Whalplode, Moulton, and Holbeach	3,937 1 26	8,415 17 5	(*a*) 3 2 29	235 0 0	41 1 20	2,485 0 0	11,198 13 7	3,972 1 35	5,414 3 6 *391 18 6*	(*a*) Two roods out of this area was a free grant for a parsonage site.
Ingleby	671 1 13	1,060 0 0	—	—	—	—	6,779 6 11	671 1 13	625 0 0	
Wingland	3,204 0 24	6,988 17 11	(*b*)2 3 12	—	—	—	16,670 16 8	(*a*)3,204 2 13	3,635 16 6 *139 0 3*	(*a*) 357 A. 0 R. 25 P. in hand. The change in total acreage is due to a new survey. (*b*) Made up of two free grants as sites for a church and parsonage.
NORFOLK:										
Deopham	174 1 11	247 17 6	—	—	—	—	1,130 9 11	(*a*)175 3 3	200 0 0	(*a*) New survey. This property is an escheat.
West Walton	429 2 1	682 5 9	408 1 25	13,550 0 0	—	—	9 0 0	21 0 16	33 3 6 *3 3 6*	
NORTHANTS:										
Salcey	254 2 8½	619 16 4	—	—	—	—	—	254 2 5	(*a*)531 0 9 *5 6 10*	(*a*) This rent includes the shooting over about 1,247 acres of woods (in hand).
Shrob Walk	307 0 23	605 4 7	—	—	—	—	1,225 12 10	306 2 29	265 19 0 *10 4*	
NOTTS:										
Balderton	363 1 10	552 15 6	—	—	—	—	585 12 4	363 1 10	307 5 5 *17 17 2*	
OXFORD:										
Stowood	553 3 31	465 0 0	—	—	—	—	545 6 6	553 3 31	484 0 0	
Whichwood	3,184 0 38	4,991 0 8	—	—	1 1 39	300 0 0	7,998 8 8	(*a*)3,184 3 17	2,012 16 1 *121 2 1*	(*a*) 788 A. 2 R. 23 P. in hand during the year.
SUFFOLK:										
Shimpling (Escheat)	571 2 15	627 10 0	(*b*) 0 1 28	—	(*b*) 1 0 4	—	144 0 7	572 0 31	(*a*) 253 3 2 *90 3 2*	(*a*) In hand as from 10th October 1892. (*b*) An exchange.

SCHEDULE of Agricultural Estates—*continued.*

Situation.	At 31st March 1879.		Sales.		Purchases.		Expenditure on Repairs and Improvements.	At 31st March 1893.		Observations.
	Acreage.	Rental.	Acreage.	Amount realised.	Acreage.	Amount of Purchase Money.		Acreage.	Rental, including *Tithe Rent-charge.*	
	A. R. P.	£ s. d.	A. R. P.	£ s. d.	A. R. P.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	A. R. P.	£ s. d.	
SURREY:										
Esher	934 2 23	(*a*)2,223 17 10	(*c*) 67 0 31	15,957 15 0	—	—	5,857 3 5	864 1 20	(*b*)1,766 16 7 *97 4 6*	(*a*) This rent includes the value of the shooting over about 866 acres of Crown woods. (*b*) This rent includes the value of the shooting over about 166 acres of Crown woods. (*c*) These sales include some small portions of the woods.
SUSSEX:										
Poynings	3,606 1 20	(*a*)3,650 16 1	6 1 4¼	1,308 5 0	—	—	5,702 4 1	3,606 0 19	(*b*)2,950 6 0 *412 6 3*	(*a*) This rent includes the value of the shooting over about 114 acres of woodland. (*b*) This rent similarly includes shooting over 232 acres of woods.
WILTS:										
Bishops Cannings	7,023 1 24	8,014 19 7	3 0 8	254 17 6	163 1 19	4,800 0 0	32,857 18 4	(*a*)7,226 3 7	4,516 5 11 *133 13 8*	(*a*) Part of the discrepancy in acreage is due to the falling in of certain leaseholds held for lives and the consequent addition of 33 A. 0 R. 5 P. to the estate. The rest is probably due to new surveys.
Bromham	1,674 1 39	2,140 17 6	1 3 6	758 0 0	—	—	8,201 9 5	(*a*)1,697 3 36	1,815 13 0 *292 12 4*	(*a*) Leaseholds for lives to the extent of 23 A. 1 R. 10 P. fell in during the period and were added to the estate.
YORKS:										
Swine with Benningholme and Dowthorpe	4,328 2 5	8,255 11 1	0 0 10	12 10 0	—	—	10,176 18 6	4,339 2 14	4,355 13 8 *22 9 8*	The land was sold as a site for a chapel. A small quantity of land, formerly plantation, was taken into the Benningholme farms, increasing their area by about 11 acres.
Meux	290 3 36	388 3 0	—	—	—	—	212 13 6	290 3 36	275 0 0	
Sunk Island	6,599 3 17	13,523 16 2	—	—	—	—	14,318 5 8	6,579 1 20	9,720 7 0	About 20 acres taken for the construction of a main drain, 1881–4.
Acklam	474 0 39	601 18 10	—	—	—	—	198 17 6	474 0 39	315 5 0	
Northstead	501 2 8	1,265 2 6	—	—	—	—	180 14 7	501 2 8	1,497 0 0	
Sutton and Greenthwaite Grange	190 2 39	220 0 0	—	—	—	—	—	190 2 39	151 1 8 *21 1 8*	
Woodhouse Grange	1,170 0 32	1,231 0 0	—	—	—	—	867 14 0	1,170 0 32	727 17 4 *121 9 2*	
Heworth Grange	113 0 6	464 13 7	—	—	—	—	493 9 7	113 0 6	300 0 0	
Rybill	83 0 16	155 0 0	0 3 27	255 0 0	—	—	17 11 0	82 0 39	104 0 0 *18 7 9*	The land was sold to a railway company. The purchase money included the extiuguishment of certain common rights belonging to the Crown.
Boroughbridge	3,345 0 19	6,443 11 4	—	—	—	—	6,122 12 6	3,345 0 19	4,299 13 9	
Skelton Cote	256 1 37	200 1 0	—	—	—	—	—	256 1 37	160 0 0	
TOTAL	66,187 2 10¼	112,900 12 6	960 0 19	45,971 10 0	490 2 24	24,823 0 0	245,269 8 6	65,906 1 18¼	72,195 5 11 *4,059 18 6*	

V.

Appendix A., V.

STATEMENT, by Estates, of Agricultural Holdings above Three Acres in Sir Nigel Kingscote's charge in the Year to 10th October 1892.

(*Handed in by Sir Nigel Kingscote, see Question* 125.)

Situation.	Number of Holdings between											Area above 1,000 Acres.	Number of Holdings.
	3 and 50 Acres.	50 and 100 Acres.	100 and 200 Acres.	200 and 300 Acres.	300 and 400 Acres.	400 and 500 Acres.	500 and 600 Acres.	600 and 700 Acres.	700 and 800 Acres.	800 and 900 Acres.	900 and 1,000 Acres.		
Bedford:													
Stagsden	1	2	4	3	1 in hand.	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	13
Berks:													
Old and New Windsor	8	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10
Bucks:													
Datchet	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Eton		—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Cambridge:													
Burwell	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Chester:													
Delamere	2	—	—	2	—	—	2	—	—	1	—	—	7
Dorset:													
Portland	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Essex:													
Hainault	2	1	2	1	1	2	—	1	1	—	—	—	11
Stapleford Abbotts	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
Gloucester:													
Hagloe	1	1	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
Hants:													
Isle of Wight	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Hunts:													
Great Staughton	—	—	—	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
Kent:													
Neat's Court	1	—	1	1 in hand.	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	6
Eltham	4	—	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10
Lancaster:													
Aldingham	1	—	1	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
Lincoln:													
Billingborough	2	2	—	—	—	1	2	1	1	1	—	—	10
Croft	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Gedney	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	2
Holbeach	—	—	—	2	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Ingleby	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Whaplode and Moulton	3	2	3	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	10
Lincoln and Norfolk:													
Wingland	—	—	1	2	2 of which 1 in hand.	2	—	—	—	—	1	—	8
Norfolk:													
Deopham	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
West Walton	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Northampton and Bucks:													
Salcey	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Notts:													
Balderton	1	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
Oxford:													
Stowood	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	
Whichwood	2	—	1	1 in hand.	1	1 in hand.	—	1	—	—	—	1	8
Suffolk:													
Shimpling	—	—	—	—	—	—	1 in hand.	—	—	—	—	—	1
Carried forward	33	10	26	27	10	10	7	5	3	3	1	3	138

Appendix A., V. and VI.

Situation.	Number of Holdings between 3 and 50 Acres.	50 and 100 Acres.	100 and 200 Acres.	200 and 300 Acres.	300 and 400 Acres.	400 and 500 Acres.	500 and 600 Acres.	600 and 700 Acres.	700 and 800 Acres.	800 and 900 Acres.	900 and 1,000 Acres.	Area above 1,000 Acres.	Number of Holdings.
Brought forward	33	10	26	27	10	10	7	5	3	3	1	3	138
SURREY:													
Bagshot	4	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5
Egham	6	—	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10
Esher	2	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8
Richmond	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
SUSSEX:													
Poynings	—	2	—	—	1	—	1	1	—	—	—	1	6
WILTS:													
Bishop's Cannings	3	—	1	—	—	—	1	2	—	—	—	4	11
Bromham	9	—	1	1	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	13
YORKS:													
Acklam	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Benningholme	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	2
Borobridge	—	—	1	2	1	2	1	—	1	—	—	—	8
Dowthorpe	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Heworth Grange	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Meux	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Northstead	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Ryhill	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Sunk Island	9	—	—	4	2	2	3	1	2	—	—	—	23
Sutton Grange	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Swine	1	—	—	3	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	8
Woodhouse Grange	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	2
Totals	67	16	37	43	19	17	13	12	8	3	1	8	244

VI.

(*Handed in by Sir Nigel Kingscote. See Question* 155.)

THIS INDENTURE made the day of 189 . Between the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty of the first part, Sir Robert Nigel Fitzhardinge Kingscote, K.C.B., the Commissioner of Her Majesty's Woods, Forests, and Land Revenues in charge of the premises hereby demised of the second part and

herein-after called "the Lessee" of the third part Witnesseth that in consideration of the rents and covenants herein-after reserved and contained, he, the said Robert Nigel Fitzhardinge Kingscote as such Commissioner as aforesaid in exercise of the powers of the Acts 10, George IV., chapter 50 and 14 and 15 Victoria chapter 42, and of all other powers and authorities enabling him so to do and with the consent of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury signified by their warrant dated the day of 189 . Doth on behalf of Her Majesty demise and lease unto the lessee all that farmhouse buildings and lands containing a. r. p. or thereabouts situate in the parish of in the county of

more particularly described in the schedule hereto and delineated and coloured red on the plan these presents and known as . Reserving thereout unto Her Majesty, her heirs and successors all timber and other trees, tellers, pollards, spires, saplings, (whether on stools or otherwise) and plantations, and all mineral substances, and substrata whatsoever (except such materials as may be required for making and repairing roads upon the premises) with liberty for the lessor and his grantees and agents or any of them with or without horses, cattle, carts, engines, and carriages from time to time to enter upon the premises and to mark, fell, cut, search for work, make merchantable and carry away the same respectively and for such purposes to make and erect all requisite conveniences on the demised premises paying reasonable compensation for damage done to the crops on the land, the amount thereof if not agreed upon being fixed by a valuation made by two arbitrators or their umpire appointed in manner herein-after provided and reserving power also for the lessor at any time or times upon giving to the lessee or leaving for *him* on the demised premises three calendar months' previous notice in writing of the intention so to do to determine the tenancy of any part or parts not exceeding acres in the whole of the land demised paying to the lessee on possession being given in addition to any other compensation to which *he* may be by law entitled either the value of any crops being ordinary annual crops grown from seed sown on the land included in the notice previous to the service thereof and the value of any crop of grass thereon or the value of the seeds sown and manure purchased other than manure purchased in lieu of produce sold and labour bestowed in preparing the land previous to the service of the notice, but from which no crop shall have been subsequently taken, such compensation, if not agreed upon, being settled by a valuation made by two arbitrators or their umpire appointed in manner herein-after appearing, and making an abatement in the rent for the land taken, the amount thereof and the period from which it shall commence being settled by Her Majesty's Receiver for the time being of the rents and profits of the premises. To hold the premises unto the lessee from the 10th day of October 18 , for the term of years. Paying unto the Queen's Majesty, her heirs and successors the

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yearly rent of l. by equal quarterly payments upon the 5th day of January, the 5th day of April, the 5th day of July, and the 10th day of October in every year (except that the rent for the last quarter of a year of the tenancy shall be paid in advance on the 5th day of July preceding the end thereof), the first payment being due on the 5th day of January 18 . And also paying in manner aforesaid a further yearly rent equal to 5l. per centum upon all monies and expenses laid out or incurred by Her Majesty, her heirs or successors, at the request of the lessee in or incidental to draining, building, or other improvements on the premises, except in erecting cottages, for which 4l. per centum only shall be payable, any such rent payable in respect of any building or other improvement except draining to commence from the quarter day next after the completion of such building or improvement, and any such rent payable in respect of draining to commence on the 5th day of April or the 10th day of October, whichever shall first happen after any monies or expenses shall have been laid out or incurred. And it is agreed that as to the amount of the monies and expenses laid out or incurred as aforesaid, and as to the purposes for which, and the dates when the same were laid out and incurred, and as to the date of completion of any building or improvement, the certificate in writing of Her Majesty's said Receiver shall be conclusive evidence. And also paying in manner aforesaid a further yearly rent of 40l. for every acre (and in proportion for a less quantity) of meadow or pasture land broken up or used otherwise than as meadow or pasture land without the previous licence in writing of the lessor, and during the last two years of the tenancy a further yearly rent of 10l. for every acre (and in proportion for a less quantity) of land hereby demised, which during that period shall without such license as aforesaid be managed or cultivated contrary to the covenants herein-after contained, such last-mentioned additional rents (which are reserved as liquidated or fixed rents agreed to be paid in the cases aforesaid and not by way of penalty) to be paid quarterly upon the days aforesaid, the first payment thereof respectively to be made on such of the said days as shall next happen after the same rent or rents shall have been incurred. All which said several rents herein-before reserved, or such of them as may from time to time be payable, are to be paid into the hands of Her Majesty's said Receiver free from all deduction whatsoever, except in respect of the landlord's property tax and tithe rentcharge. And the lessee hereby covenants with the Queen's Majesty, her heirs and successors, in manner following, that is to say:

1. To pay unto the Queen's Majesty, her heirs and successors, the rents hereby reserved at the times and in manner aforesaid.

2. To pay the land tax, drainage and sewer rates, and all other taxes, rates, and outgoings whatsoever now or at any time hereafter payable in respect of the said premises (except the landlord's property tax and tithe rentcharge), together with a proportionate part thereof up to the end of the tenancy.

3. To keep, and at the end of the tenancy to leave in good and substantial repair order and condition, all buildings (with the fixtures therein), walls, gates, stiles, mounds, banks, bridges, roads, drains, outfalls, culverts, watercourses, sluices, sewers, hedges, ditches, and fences, now being or that may hereafter be on the demised premises, and as to such parts of the said buildings and fences as have been, or are usually, painted or tarred, properly painted and tarred. And to keep, and at the end of the tenancy to leave the demised land clean and in good heart and condition, and cultivated and managed in a good and husbandlike manner, and in accordance with the special provisions herein-after contained. Provided that the lessor or his agents may at all times enter upon the premises and examine the same, and take any plan thereof; and if any want of repair shall be found, or any ditches, watercourses, sluices, sewers, or drains shall be found not properly cleared out, or if the land shall be found not in good condition and properly cultivated, and the lessee shall not within three calendar months next after a notice in writing of any such matters shall have been given to or left on the said premises for *him*, repair and amend the same according to the covenants herein contained, the lessor may (but without prejudice to any other remedy of Her Majesty, her heirs, or successors) cause the same or any of them to be done, and the lessee shall, on demand, repay to the lessor all expense incurred in respect thereof.

4. At all times during the tenancy to keep all the buildings for the time being on the said premises insured against loss or damage by fire in the joint names of the Queen's Majesty, her heirs and successors and the lessee in some insurance office or offices approved of in writing by the lessor, in a sum equal to three-fourth parts at the least of the actual value thereof respectively, and to show whenever required so to do, to Her Majesty's said Receiver the policy or policies of insurance, and the receipt or receipts for the premium or premiums in respect thereof for the current year. And if default shall be made in keeping the buildings or any of them so insured, or in the production of the policy or policies, or receipt or receipts as aforesaid, the lessor may insure the said buildings or any of them in such name or names as *he* may think fit in the amount herein-before mentioned, or in any less amount; and all monies paid for such purpose shall be recoverable as rent hereby reserved and in arrear. And all monies payable under any insurance shall be received by the lessor and applied in rebuilding, or reinstating the buildings in respect of which the same shall be paid.

5. To lay up and stack in the barns or other convenient places upon the demised premises, all the corn, grain, hay, and straw produced thereon, and to consume and spend thereon all such hay and straw, and the chaff and other fodder arising from the said corn and grain, and to leave on the premises at the end of the tenancy so much of such hay, straw, chaff, and other fodder as may be unconsumed, being paid for the same as for consumption on the premises. And also to consume on the premises all the root crops and green crops grown thereon, and all linseed cake, cotton cake, and other feeding stuff which shall be brought on the premises, in pursuance of any of the provisions herein contained. And to pay to Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, as liquidated damages, the sum of 5l. for every load of any of the produce of the premises which should under these presents be consumed on the premises, or of dung or manure which shall be carried off the said premises, without the consent in writing of the lessor. Provided that until the lessor shall, by notice in writing given to or left on the premises for the lessee, require *him* to discontinue doing so, the lessee may sell and carry off the premises hay and wheat straw (except the produce of the last two years), not exceeding one half of the produce in any year, on condition of bringing back upon the premises within six months after any such sale or carrying off, either one half of the market value of the hay and straw sold or carried off, in good rotten dung, bones, or other manure approved of in writing by the lessor, or three-fourths of such market value in linseed cake, cotton cake or other feeding stuff not produced on the holding and approved of in writing by the lessor. And the lessee shall, if required, produce correct and duly vouched accounts of all hay and straw sold or carried off, and of all manure, cake, and feeding stuff brought back, specifying therein the times of sale or carrying off and bringing back respectively.

6. To spread over the said land or such part thereof as may most require the same in a husbandlike manner all the dung and manure arising from and brought on the said premises, and in the last year of the tenancy to spread such proportion as may be approved of by the lessor or the incoming tenant over such part of the land as shall have been properly prepared for root crops, green crops, and fallows, and at the end of the tenancy to leave in the proper places upon the said premises all the dung and manure then being thereupon without requiring any compensation for the same.

7. To reside upon the demised premises unless the lessor shall by some writing dispense either wholly or partially with such residence.

8. To keep upon the demised premises a field-book showing how every field or parcel thereof has been cropped and cultivated in every year of the tenancy, and permit the lessor and all other persons appointed by him to inspect such book, and to take copies thereof or extracts therefrom, and to deliver to the lessor when required true copies of or extracts from such book verified if required by a declaration in writing under the hand of the lessee.

9. Not to cut any coppice, wood, or underwood growing upon the said land at any other periods than those fixed by the custom of the country, nor without giving to the lessor one calendar month's previous notice in writing of *his* intention so to do, and not to cut any tellers, whether growing from stools or otherwise, without the consent in writing of the lessor, who

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may plant upon the said coppice or wood land any quantity of young trees that he may think proper.

10. To preserve all the trees, tellers, pollards, spires, and saplings for the time being growing upon the said premises from bite of cattle or other injury, and not to commit or suffer any wilful or voluntary waste, spoil, or destruction in or upon the said demised premises or any part thereof.

11. Not to cultivate any part of the demised land with hemp, flax, teazels, woad, or other unusual or exhausting crops, nor leave for seed on the said premises a greater quantity of turnips, rape, mustard, rye, grass, or any such plants than may be necessary for seeding the farm from year to year without the previous consent in writing of the lessor. Provided nevertheless that (except during the last two years of the tenancy) the lessee may, until required by notice in writing from the lessor given to or left on the premises for the lessee to discontinue doing so, leave a quantity not exceeding in the whole acres of for seed on condition of bringing back upon the said premises within six months next after the sale of any such seed either one-third of the market value thereof in good rotten dung bones or other manure approved of in writing by the lessor, or one-half of such market value in linseed cake, cotton cake, or other feeding stuff not produced on the holding and approved of in writing by the lessor, and the lessee, shall, if required, produce correct and duly vouched accounts of all seed sold, and of all manure cake and feeding stuff brought back specifying therein the times of sale, and bringing back respectively.

12. Not to cut for hay any of the pasture lands hereby demised, and once at least in every year to spud and destroy the thistles and docks thereon; and not to cut for hay more than once a year the meadow land hereby demised, and after every crop of hay to spread thereon not less that 10 cartloads per acre of good dung or other manure equivalent thereto, and at all times to keep cut and levelled the ant-hills on such pasture and meadow land.

13. Not to cultivate during the last two years of the tenancy more than one half of the arable land with any white straw crops, including wheat, oats, barley, and rye; and not to cultivate in the last year of the tenancy with any such crops any part cultivated with any such crops in the preceding year; and not to plant any field with potatoes more than once in such last two years.

14. In each of the last two years of the tenancy to sow with the spring corn (such as barley or oats) the land which shall have been cultivated with green crops or fallowed and properly manured in the preceding season, not being less than one-sixth part of the arable lands hereby demised, with a sufficient quantity of good clover or other grass seeds, and properly barrow in the same. The clover and grass seeds sown in the last year (provided no cattle, sheep, or other live stock shall have been depastured thereon), to be paid for by the lessor.

15. To leave at the end of the tenancy (subject as herein-after mentioned) properly fallowed and sown with turnips or other root or green crop, properly hoed and managed one-fourth part of the arable lands hereby demised, which shall be in due course for the same the labour and seed properly bestowed on the land being paid for by the lessor. But the lessor or the incoming tenant may, if he so desire, enter with servants and agents, and with horses, carts, ploughs, and other implements, upon such lands to be left fallowed at any time after the commencement of the last year of the tenancy for the purpose of making such fallows, sowing and otherwise preparing and manuring the land in the usual course of agriculture.

16. To leave at the end of the tenancy one-sixth part of the arable land in clover lay of one year's continuance only and permit, if required, the lessor or the incoming tenant at any time after the 24th day of August next preceding the end of the tenancy to enter upon, plough, sow, and otherwise prepare the lands so to be left in clover lay as aforesaid as he shall think fit.

17. To give up to the lessor or the incoming tenant proper and sufficient accommodation on the premises for him or his agent, and for his servant's horses, carts, engines, implements, and cattle from the respective times herein-before mentioned for entering upon the lands to be left for fallow and in clover lay to the end of the tenancy without any abatement of rent or other allowance for the same and to permit him and them to carry out and spread the manure upon the said premises to and upon the lands to be left for fallow and in clover lay.

18. Not to assign or underlet the demised premises or any part thereof (except that cottages may be underlet) or part with the possession of these presents without the previous consent in writing of the lessor and to procure every assignment of the demised premises or any part thereof and all orders of court probates of wills and letters of administration affecting these presents or the tenancy hereby created to be within six calendar months from the date thereof respectively inrolled in the Office of Land Revenue Records and Inrolments and a minute or docket thereof entered in the Office of the Commissioners of Woods.

19. And it is agreed that the lessee may use the barns, granary, and rickyard until the 25th day of March next after the determination of the tenancy (unless determined by re-entry under the provision herein-after contained) rendering up the same in good repair for threshing out, dressing, and marketing the corn grown on the premises in the last year of the tenancy, and the lessee shall so thresh out such corn as not to lessen the value of the fodder, and in such manner that the lessor or the incoming tenant shall be supplied with straw as may be reasonably required for use on the premises.

20. And it is also agreed that in the event of the lessee cultivating any part of the demised premises as a market garden *he* shall be entitled before the end or determination of *his* tenancy to remove any asparagus, rhubarb, peppermint, lavender, hops, or any perennial crop sown or any plants, fruit-bushes, or similar market garden crop sown or planted by *him*, and then growing on the said premises if *he* shall desire so to do but *he* shall not be entitled to be paid any compensation whatsoever, for or in any way in respect of any such crops, plants, or bushes that may not be so removed, and nothing herein contained shall be deemed or taken to be a consent by the landlord within the meaning of the Agricultural Holdings (England) Act, 1883, to an improvement by the making of any garden or by the planting of any orchards or fruit-bushes.

21. And it is agreed that in the event of the lessee not making any claim on the determination (as to the whole or part of the demised premises, of the tenancy for compensation under the Agricultural Holdings (England) Act, 1883, all claims which either the lessor or the lessee may be entitled to make against the other of them under these presents shall be referred to two arbitrators or their umpire to be respectively appointed in conformity with the provisions of sections 9 and 10 of the last-mentioned Act, except that the President for the time being of the Surveyors' Institution shall be substituted for the County Court, and for the Land Commissioners and every such arbitration shall be subject to the provisions as to references contained in the said last-mentioned Act, and the arbitrators or arbitrator or umpire appointed hereunder shall have and may exercise all the powers conferred on a referee or umpire appointed under such Act, and their or his award shall be made within the respective times limited by and in all other respects in conformity with the provisions of such Act with reference to awards of a referee or umpire appointed thereunder, and as if the arbitrators or arbitrator or umpire appointed under these presents were referees or a referee or umpire duly appointed under that Act except that the award in writing shall be final and conclusive, and that each party shall bear the costs and charges of the arbitrator appointed by him or on his behalf, and all expenses incurred by him with reference to such arbitration, and that the costs and charges of the umpire (if any) shall be divided equally between the said parties.

22. Provided that at the end of the tenancy, the lessee shall not be entitled to any payment, allowance, compensation or rights, founded upon the custom of the district in which the demised premises are situate. And further that all money due to Her Majesty, her heirs or successors, from the lessee, for rent, breaches of covenant or otherwise shall be deducted from any compensation to which the lessee may be entitled under these presents or otherwise.

23. Provided always and these presents are upon this condition, that if any rent hereby reserved, shall be in arrear for 40 days or if there shall be a breach of any of the covenants and conditions on the part of the lessee herein contained, or if a receiver in bankruptcy of *his* estate shall be appointed, or a receiving order made against *him*, whilst the premises hereby demised or any part thereof remain vested in *him*, or if the lessee shall either voluntarily or involuntarily do, or suffer anything in consequence whereof *his* interest in the demised

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premises shall, without such consent as aforesaid, become vested in any other person, except by bequest or by representation as executor or administrator. Then, and in any of the said cases the lessor may re-enter and retain possession of the demised premises, as fully in all respects as if these presents had not been made, and in case of any such re-entry there shall be payable by the lessee to Her Majesty her heirs and successors, in addition to any rent then due, a proportionate part of the accruing rent for the then current quarter of a year, up to the day on which such re-entry shall have been made.

24. It is hereby agreed and declared that the term "lessor" herein means the Queen's Majesty, her heirs, successors, and assigns, or so long as the reversion of the demised premises is vested in the Crown, the Commissioner or Commissioners, or other the person or persons for the time being entitled by law to the management and direction thereof, and that all rights and obligations of the lessee under these presents, shall devolve with the leasehold interest hereby created and be accordingly enjoyed, observed and performed by the person or persons in whom such interest shall for the time being be vested.

And the said Robert Nigel Fitzhardinge Kingscote doth hereby direct that this deed shall be deemed to be fully and sufficiently inrolled by the deposit of a duplicate thereof in the Office of Land Revenue Records and Inrolments, and the filing or making an entry of such deposit by the keeper of the said records and inrolments. In witness whereof the said parties to these presents of the second and third parts have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

THE SCHEDULE above referred to.

No. on Plan.	Description.	Cultivation.	Quality.	
			a.	r.

VII.

ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONERS FOR ENGLAND.

Extent of Agricultural Property (including Bishoprick Permanent Estates) with Gross and Net Receipts therefrom in the following Years.

(*Handed in by Mr. A. de Bock Porter. See Questions* 448, 698.)

——	1880.	1881.	1882.	1883.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.	1889.	1890.	1891.	1892.
Acreage of land in possession (say) - - -	212,600	231,000	236,000	249,000	254,000	258,000	260,000	263,000	270,000	273,000	276,000	278,000	278,758
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Rents - - - - - - - -	308,885	321,996	350,013	340,872	327,135	322,520	311,918	305,725	306,904	310,472	312,645	309,604	310,061
Deduct allowances to tenants and arrears irrecoverable written off.	25,417	33,753	48,977	31,160	19,427	26,497	31,963	25,502	25,758	20,740	20,081	15,579	14,023
Total gross receipts - - -	283,468	288,243	301,036	309,712	307,708	296,023	279,955	280,223	281,146	289,732	292,564	294,025	296,038
Outgoings:—													
Fee farm rents, stipends, and other fixed charges -	8,640	8,830	9,015	9,910	9,260	9,088	9,502	9,481	9,760	9,786	10,040	10,036	9,978
Land tax and drainage rates - - - -	5,364	6,165	6,257	6,889	7,000	7,134	7,589	8,152	8,543	8,947	8,934	8,614	8,922
Tithe rentcharge on lands let tithe free - -	2,692	2,899	2,731	3,311	2,765	3,048	3,270	3,578	4,392	4,798	5,164	6,939	14,716
Repairs of premises - - - - - -	12,541	12,317	12,158	13,246	18,456	14,940	10,710	12,026	15,300	12,362	9,158	13,200	15,300
Tenant right allowances for manures, grass, seeds, &c., losses in respect of farms in hand, and sundry payments not classed.	2,600	8,466	10,947	9,111	1,914	8,388	10,234	8,647	11,554	4,808	2,524	4,291	3,575
Subscriptions, &c. to schools and churches - -	4,540	4,193	5,254	5,245	5,918	6,700	6,400	5,555	4,865	4,417	5,230	4,722	5,880
Agency, including audit and other expenses - -	12,435	12,755	13,530	13,872	13,590	13,378	12,506	12,740	12,655	12,950	12,976	13,185	12,541
Farm buildings and improvements - - -	48,917	44,300	46,700	38,900	35,767	56,980	37,174	41,656	32,100	35,200	30,145	33,050	42,860
Drainage - - - - - - -	11,240	10,352	12,699	19,418	14,292	9,948	7,825	6,611	5,695	5,438	4,532	3,449	4,066
Total expenditure - - -	108,969	110,277	119,291	119,902	108,962	129,604	105,210	108,446	104,864	98,706	88,703	97,486	117,838
Net receipts - - -	174,499	177,966	181,745	189,810	198,746	166,419	174,745	171,777	176,282	191,026	203,861	196,539	178,200

10, Whitehall Place,
12 December 1893.

A. de Bock Porter,
Secretary.

VIII.

ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSION (SALE OF AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS).

(*Handed in by Mr. A. de Bock-Porter. Question* 514.)

SCHEME for Sale of Agricultural Holdings communicated by Ecclesiastical Commissioners to their Agents, to be applied from time to time as the Commissioners may direct.

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners are prepared to sell to the agricultural tenants on their estate at , at a price to be agreed upon, the freehold of their holdings on the following terms.

The Commissioners would require the payment of 15*l*. out of each 100*l*. of the purchase money on the date from which the transaction takes effect, and would allow the balance (that is, 85*l*. out of each 100*l*.) to remain upon mortgage to be paid with interest in equal half-yearly instalments spread over a period of 30 years.

The balance of the purchase money, with interest at the rate of 3⅝ths per cent., would be paid off by 60 half-yearly instalments of 2*l*. 15*s*. each, for every 100*l*. remaining on mortgage, being at the rate of 5*l*. 10*s*. per cent. per annum for 30 years, at the end of which time the whole liability would have been fully discharged.

The title of the Commissioners is Parliamentary, and the conveyance and mortgage deeds would be in the simplest form; and, assuming the title and the deeds to be accepted without question, the deeds would be provided by the Commissioners, free of charge to the purchaser, subject only to the payment of the Stamp Duty on the conveyance of mortgage.

Minerals, with full mineral rights, would be reserved to the Commissioners.

The mortgage deed would have a schedule attached, which would show the balance of the loan remaining unpaid after each of the half-yearly instalments has been paid, and should it suit the convenience of a purchaser, the Commissioners would at any time accept payment of the balance without requiring the usual notice.

Should the tenant be unable or unwilling to purchase his holding, the Commissioners would feel at liberty at the end of, say, one year from the date of their offer being made, to dispose of the property, subject, of course, to the existing tenancy, and with or without similar facilities as to the payment of purchase money.

In order that the proposition may be fully understood the following example is given:—

Suppose A. to be the tenant of 20 acres of land with a house, &c., thereon, at a rent of 45*l*. per annum, the price required for the purchase of the freehold being, say, 1,300*l*. Of this sum there would be paid down at the outset, 195*l*., leaving 1,105*l*. on mortgage of the property. The half-yearly payment in respect of the mortgage, calculated at 5*l*. 10*s*. per cent. per annum, would be 30*l*. 7*s*. 9*d*. This payment would clear off the mortgage debt in 30 years. If at any time during that period, say at the end of the fifteenth year, A. should be in a position to pay off the balance of the mortgage, the Commissioners would be willing at once to accept such balance, which in this case would be 698*l*. 0*s*. 9*d*. The Stamp Duty payable would be 8*l*., viz., 6*l*. 10*s*. for the purchase deed, and 1*l*. 10*s*. for the mortgage deed.

10, Whitehall Place, London, S.W.,
23 April 1885.

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Table for the Repayment of a Mortgage Loan of 100*l.*, together with Interest at 3·63*l.* per cent. per Annum in 30 Years by means of 60 half-yearly Payments of 2*l.* 15*s.* each, to include Interest and a proportionate repayment of the Loan.

Half-yearly Payments.	Interest at 3·63*l.* per Annum.	Instalment of Loan repaid.	Balance of Loan unpaid.	Half-yearly Payments.	Interest at 3·63*l.* per Annum.	Instalment of Loan repaid.	Balance of Loan unpaid.
	2*l.* 15*s.*				2*l.* 15*s.*		
No.	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	No.	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*
1	1 16 4	0 18 8	99 1 4	31	1 2 11	1 12 1	61 11 4
2	1 16 0	0 19 0	98 2 4	32	1 2 4	1 12 8	59 18 8
3	1 15 8	0 19 4	97 3 0	33	1 1 9	1 13 3	58 5 5
4	1 15 3	0 19 9	96 3 3	34	1 1 2	1 13 10	56 11 7
5	1 14 11	1 0 1	95 3 2	35	1 0 7	1 14 5	54 17 2
6	1 14 7	1 0 5	94 2 9	36	0 19 11	1 15 1	53 2 1
7	1 14 2	1 0 10	93 1 11	37	0 19 3	1 15 9	51 6 4
8	1 13 10	1 1 2	92 0 9	38	0 18 8	1 16 4	49 10 0
9	1 13 5	1 1 7	90 19 2	39	0 18 0	1 17 0	47 13 0
10	1 13 0	1 2 0	89 17 2	40	0 17 4	1 17 8	45 15 4
11	1 12 7	1 2 5	88 14 9	41	0 16 7	1 18 5	43 16 11
12	1 12 3	1 2 9	87 12 0	42	0 15 11	1 19 1	41 17 10
13	1 11 10	1 3 2	86 8 10	43	0 15 3	1 19 9	39 18 1
14	1 11 5	1 3 7	85 5 3	44	0 14 6	2 0 6	37 17 7
15	1 10 11	1 4 1	84 1 2	45	0 13 9	2 1 3	35 16 4
16	1 10 6	1 4 6	82 16 8	46	0 13 0	2 2 0	33 14 4
17	1 10 1	1 4 11	81 11 9	47	0 12 3	2 2 9	31 11 7
18	1 9 7	1 5 5	80 6 4	48	0 11 6	2 3 6	29 8 1
19	1 9 2	1 5 10	79 0 6	49	0 10 8	2 4 4	27 3 9
20	1 8 8	1 6 4	77 14 2	50	0 9 11	2 5 1	24 18 8
21	1 8 3	1 6 9	76 7 5	51	0 9 1	2 5 11	22 12 9
22	1 7 9	1 7 3	75 0 2	52	0 8 3	2 6 9	20 6 0
23	1 7 3	1 7 9	73 12 5	53	0 7 5	2 7 7	17 18 5
24	1 6 9	1 8 3	72 4 2	54	0 6 6	2 8 6	15 9 11
25	1 6 3	1 8 9	70 15 5	55	0 5 8	2 9 4	13 0 7
26	1 5 8	1 9 4	69 6 1	56	0 4 9	2 10 3	10 10 4
27	1 5 2	1 9 10	67 16 3	57	0 3 10	2 11 2	7 19 2
28	1 4 7	1 10 5	66 5 10	58	0 2 11	2 12 1	5 7 1
29	1 4 1	1 10 11	64 14 11	59	0 1 11	2 13 1	2 14 0
30	1 3 6	1 11 6	63 3 5	60	0 1 0	2 14 0	—

Appendix A.,
IX.—1.

IX.—1.

GUY'S HOSPITAL.

LINCOLNSHIRE ESTATE.

STATEMENT of RENTS for the years 1801 to 1892.

(*Handed in by Mr. E. H. Lushington. See Question* 1687.)

Year (ending Michaelmas).	Acreage.	Rent.	Rent Per Acre.	Arrears (if over 200*l*.).	Temporary Abatement.	Improvements (New Buildings, Enclosures, &c.).	Remarks.
	A. R. P.	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	
1801	4,967 (about)	4,499 4 0	0 18 1	None.	—	—	
1802	„ „	4,704 14 0	0 18 11	„	—	—	
1803	„ „	4,891 14 0	0 19 8	—	—	—	
1804	„ „	5,006 14 0	1 0 2	—	—	—	
1805	„ „	4,866 14 0	0 19 7	—	—	—	
1806	„ „	4,914 16 0	0 19 9	—	—	5,107 5 0	New embankment, enclosing 295 a. 3 r. 18 p. of marsh land let for 426*l*. 10*s*. 0*d*.
1807	5,262 (about)	5,203 6 0	0 19 9	—	—	4,121 9 7	
1808	„ „	4,965 13 0	0 18 10	—	—	—	
1809	„ „	—	—	—	—	—	
1810	„ „	5,760 8 6	1 1 10	None.	—	—	
1811	„ „	6,149 6 0	1 3 4	„	—	—	
1812	„ „	6,280 11 0	1 3 10	„	—	—	
1813	„ „	6,398 16 0	1 4 3	„	—	—	
1814	„ „	6,369 11 0	1 4 2	„	—	—	
1815	„ „	6,375 1 0	1 4 2	„	—	—	
1816	„ „	6,375 1 0	1 4 2	„	—	—	
1817	„ „	6,375 1 0	1 4 2	903 5 0	—	—	
1818	„ „	6,375 1 0	1 4 2	—	—	—	
1819	„ „	6,377 1 0	1 4 2	—	—	—	
1820	„ „	6,381 1 0	1 4 2	1,221 0 0	—	—	
1821	„ „	6,381 1 0	1 4 2	1,670 10 0	—	—	
1822	„ „	6,378 17 0	1 4 2	3,318 0 0	—	—	
1823	„ „	6,378 17 0	1 4 3	2,142 10 0	—	—	
1824	„ „	6,387 9 0	1 4 3	2,281 0 0	—	—	
1825	„ „	6,387 9 0	1 4 3	2,800 10 0	—	—	
1826	„ „	6,392 9 0	1 4 3	2,387 10 0	—	—	
1827	„ „	6,396 9 0	1 4 3	2,478 7 6	—	—	
1828	„ „	6,392 10 0	1 4 3	2,296 17 6	—	—	
1829	„ „	6,544 19 0	1 4 10	2,800 7 6	—	—	
1830	„ „	6,570 0 0	1 5 0	2,690 17 6	—	—	
1831	5,262 3 26	6,754 3 0	1 5 8	1,771 10 0	—	2,800 0 0	
1832	5,263 1 20	6,911 3 0	1 6 3	2,018 0 0	—	2,000 0 0	
1833	5,275 2 30	7,124 17 6	1 7 0	1,894 10 0	—	500 0 0	
1834	5,313 0 6	7,221 17 9	1 7 2	2,305 0 0	—	1,000 0 0	
1835	5,315 3 18	7,278 19 0	1 7 4	2,343 10 0	—	657 9 4	
1836	5,315 3 18	7,308 1 6	1 7 6	1,466 10 0	—	400 0 0	
1837	5,315 3 18	7,416 8 0	1 7 10	918 0 0	—	1,122 14 7	
1838	5,315 3 18	7,531 6 0	1 8 3	677 10 0	—	2,493 8 7	
1839	5,328 3 20	7,665 8 6	1 8 9	520 10 0	—	11,116 3 5	Including 8,563*l*. 19*s*. 0*d*. for redemption of Land Tax.
1840	5,328 3 20	7,838 12 0	1 9 5	483 10 0	—	917 17 3	
1841	5,428 3 20	8,671 11 6	1 11 11	230 0 0	—	1,000 0 0	92 acres marsh land added.
1842	5,434 3 20	8,772 10 0	1 12 3	—	—	1,932 12 1	
1843	5,431 0 28	8,883 15 0	1 12 8	489 14 3	—	2,155 8 7	
1844	5,431 0 28	9,056 17 6	1 13 4	657 5 3	—	1,506 0 0	
1845	5,568 3 13	9,234 19 0	1 13 2	1,032 15 10	—	1,085 11 3	New survey of the Estate.
1846	5,572 1 3	9,359 0 9	1 13 7	593 2 0	—	1,681 6 6	
1847	5,574 1 2	9,484 17 0	1 14 0	1,164 16 9	—	1,211 10 4	
1848	5,756 0 18	9,954 5 6	1 14 7	1,197 10 8	—	2,885 6 4	74 a. 3 r. 34 p. marsh land enclosed and added.
1849	5,780 2 15	10,144 11 2	1 15 1	1,064 1 7	—	700 4 9	
1850	5,791 0 14	10,248 15 0	1 15 5	837 19 0	—	562 4 2	
1851	5,763 0 12	10,268 14 0	1 15 7	692 5 1	—	311 16 11	
1852	5,763 0 12	10,283 18 11	1 15 6	762 18 3	—	315 0 6	For marsh land reclaimed.
1853	5,768 0 12	10,168 3 3	1 15 3	640 3 5	—	845 18 3	Do.
1854	5,760 3 27	10,096 18 3	1 15 0	393 19 8	—	402 6 4	Do.
1855	5,763 2 5	10,273 1 5	1 15 7	392 10 7	—	307 12 9	Do.
1856	5,763 2 5	10,770 17 7	1 17 4	213 19 8	—	775 0 0	Do.
1857	5,763 2 5	10,785 13 6	1 17 5	364 18 10	—	326 13 8	
1858	5,770 2 38	10,762 11 4	1 17 3	263 19 3	—	429 4 11	
1859	5,770 2 0	10,725 6 0	1 17 2	249 0 1	—	363 2 4	
1860	5,762 2 8	10,770 10 0	1 17 4	342 11 5	—	839 19 5	
1861	5,764 1 36	10,828 18 8	1 17 7	—	—	1,322 14 10	
1862	6,036 0 10	10,978 19 1	1 16 2	366 19 3	—	908 10 10	Marsh land surveyed and added.
1863	6,036 1 18	11,491 16 6	1 18 1	203 17 0		1,856 7 7	
1864	6,026 1 25	11,575 13 9	1 18 5	—	—	1,153 15 4	
1865	6,026 1 25	12,023 5 0	1 19 11	200 10 5	—	5,698 2 6	Including 4,800*l*. for marsh 377 a. 0 r. 17 p. enclosed.
1866	5,965 3 33	11,998 9 2	2 0 2	—	—	4,964 18 0	Including 3,838*l*. 19*s*. 3*d*. for marsh.

Appendix A.,
IX.—1 and 2.

Year (ending Michaelmas).	Acreage.	Rent.	Rent Per Acre.	Arrears (if over £200).	Temporary Abatement.	Improvements (New Buildings, Enclosures, &c.).	Remarks.
	A. R. F.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
1867	5,967 1 17	12,423 7 2	2 1 7	—	—	—	
1868	6,146 3 20	13,042 11 3	2 2 5	—	—	3,430 15 8	Chalk House Farm bought, 120 a. 2 r. 8 p. (including 32 a. 3 r. 35 p. of marsh), and 58 a. 0 r. 11 p. of marshland added.
1869	6,145 2 30	13,235 17 2	2 3 0	—	—	587 13 0	
1870	6,391 1 9	13,432 14 1	2 2 0	—	—	555 16 7	Marsh land added.
1871	6,391 1 9	14,103 14 2	2 4 1	—	—	1,169 1 3	
1872	6,391 1 9	14,816 11 0	2 6 4	—	—	2,258 10 5	
1873	6,391 1 9	14,968 16 9	2 6 10	—	—	2,885 6 0	
1874	6,391 1 9	15,131 16 0	2 7 3	—	—	1,418 0 2	
1875	6,391 1 9	15,273 11 6	2 7 9	—	—	500 0 0	
1876	6,401 3 36	15,355 11 6	2 7 11	—	120 0 0	957 19 8	
1877	6,401 3 36	15,438 17 6	2 8 2	—	120 0 0	965 13 4	
1878	6,361 1 6	15,513 7 6	2 8 9	663 17 10	165 0 0	271 2 1	
1879	6,359 1 26	15,561 0 0	2 9 0	2,284 16 6	210 0 0	1,867 16 2	Including 1,407*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* for roads.
1880	6,322 0 35	15,235 3 3	2 8 2	3,493 12 6	2,326 4 9	158 5 0	
1881	6,322 0 35	15,101 15 0	2 7 8	4,333 12 0	2,222 7 6	334 18 8	
1882	6,321 1 29	14,891 8 6	2 7 0	6,127 18 3	1,845 12 6	—	
1883	6,321 1 29	12,553 4 0	1 19 8	3,101 16 9	752 5 6	—	Arrears remitted 2,271*l.* 2*s* 0*d.*
1884	6,321 1 8	11,014 2 6	1 14 10	2,481 6 11	842 5 0	—	
1885	6,321 0 33	10,969 9 6	1 14 7	2,773 3 0	848 10 0	—	
1886	6,321 0 33	10,642 15 4	1 13 8	2,611 10 3	434 6 3	—	N.B.—Tithes were paid by the tenants until 1888, since which time they have been partly and are now (1892) wholly paid by the Hospital.
1887	6,321 0 33	10,883 15 0	1 14 4	2,508 9 4	378 11 3	—	
1888	6,316 1 2	10,617 2 6	1 13 7	1,383 19 7	—	—	1,200*l.* arrears carried to a "Suspense account."
1889	6,316 1 12	10,599 15 6	1 13 6	1,966 18 6	—	—	
1890	6,316 1 12	10,672 10 2	1 13 9	1,264 11 5	—	—	
1891	6,316 1 12	10,831 10 0	1 14 2	1,813 11 0	—	—	
1892	6,315 2 13	10,844 17 0	1 14 2	2,363 3 0	—	—	
1893	6,315 2 13	10,879 14 9	1 14 9	1,076 5 6	1,188 4 0	—	

IX.—2.

GUY'S HOSPITAL.

Essex Estates.

Statement of Rents for the years 1801 to 1892.

(*Handed in by Mr. E. H. Lushington. See Question* 1687.)

Year (ending Michaelmas).	Acreage.	Rent.	Rent per Acre.	Arrears (if over £200).	Temporary Abatement.	Improvements (New Buildings, &c.)	Remarks.
	A. R. P.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
1801	7,968 (about)	5,642 19 5	0 14 1	None	—	—	
1802	" "	5,658 19 5	0 14 2	"	—	—	
1803	" "	5,951 19 5	0 14 11	"	—	—	
1804	" "	5,954 12 11	0 14 11	"	—	—	
1805	" "	5,954 15 5	0 14 11	"	—	—	
1806	7,838 "	5,839 15 5	0 14 10	"	—	—	Blagden Farm sold, about 130 acres.
1807	" "	5,838 14 5	0 14 10		—	—	
1808	" "	5,958 14 5	0 15 2	"	—	—	
1809	" "	6,548 12 11	0 16 8	"	—	—	
1810	" "	6,808 12 11	0 17 4	"	—	—	
1811	" "	7,111 10 6	0 18 1	"	—	—	
1812	" "	7,111 11 11	0 18 1	"	—	—	
1813	" "	7,166 14 6	0 18 3	"	—	—	
1814	" "	7,166 14 6	0 18 3	"	—	—	
1815	" "	7,246 14 6	0 18 5	—	—	—	
1816	" "	6,882 16 4	0 17 6	—	—	—	
1817	7,866 "	7,812 13 9	0 18 7	—	—	—	
1818	" "	7,392 16 4	0 18 9	—	—	—	
1819	7,867 "	7,805 16 4	0 19 10	—	—	—	
1820	" "	7,785 16 4	0 19 10	—	—	—	
1821	" "	7,966 8 4	1 0 3	—	—	—	
1822	" "	7,966 8 4	1 0 3	—	—	—	
1823	7,868 "	7,849 10 10	0 19 11	—	—	—	
1824	" "	7,855 15 10	1 0 0	408 15 9	—	—	
1825	" "	7,950 0 10	1 0 2	1,238 13 4	—	—	
1826	" "	7,950 0 10	1 0 2	933 4 10	—	—	
1827	" "	7,940 0 10	1 0 2	848 8 8	—	—	
1828	" "	7,939 13 10	1 0 2	953 10 4	—	—	
1829	7,868 "	7,999 13 10	1 0 3	1,572 5 5	—	—	
1830	" "	7,999 17 7	1 0 3	1,369 10 9	—	—	
1831	" "	7,724 1 6	0 19 6	2,407 3 5	91 0 0	—	

Appendix A., IX.—2.

Year (ending Michaelmas).	Acreage.	Rent.	Rent per Acre.	Arrears (if over 200*l.*).	Temporary Abatement.	Improvements (New Buildings, &c.).	Remarks.
	A. R. P.	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	
1832	7,893 (about)	7,712 4 0	0 19 6	2,020 15 6	858 6 6	2,086 19 0	For building new wharf.
1833	7,899 „	7,742 4 0	0 19 7	2,210 6 2	243 13 6	—	
1834	„ „	7,773 9 6	0 19 8	2,272 10 5	415 5 1	—	
1835	7,989 „	7,788 7 0	0 19 9	1,914 10 1	301 5 2	—	Ayles' land, &c., bought, about 90 acres.
1836	„ „	7,989 18 1	1 0 0	649 3 0	306 0 0	—	
1837	8,029 „	7,951 14 4	0 19 9	497 16 7	16 0 0	—	Ayles' land bought, about 40 acres.
1838	„ „	7,949 13 4	0 19 9	399 5 4	16 0 0	—	
1839	„ „	7,996 3 4	0 19 11	385 3 3	16 0 0	—	
1840	„ „	8,002 14 4	0 19 11	222 12 3	—	—	
1841	„ „	9,052 9 4	1 2 7	259 11 9	—	450 0 0	
1842	8,029 0 21	9,117 15 4	1 2 9	322 13 0	—	475 17 10	
1843	8,029 0 21	9,149 9 4	1 2 9	638 2 6	—	—	
1844	8,029 0 21	9,148 15 4	1 2 9	727 7 0	—	—	
1845	8,029 0 21	9,249 0 1	1 2 11	354 0 11	—	—	
1846	8,029 3 24	9,283 11 10	1 3 0	408 12 8	—	—	
1847	8,068 3 38	9,298 3 2	1 3 0	447 2 0	—	—	New survey of the estate.
1848	8,066 3 37	9,317 14 0	1 3 1	398 14 11	—	254 4 0	
1849	8,066 3 37	9,339 4 4	1 3 1	237 11 11	—	—	
1850	8,066 3 37	9,271 3 1	1 2 11	—	345 0 0	—	
1851	8,066 3 37	9,291 14 8	1 3 0	—	690 10 0	—	
1852	8,066 3 37	9,288 16 2	1 3 0	—	714 0 0	—	
1853	8,066 3 37	9,283 13 8	1 3 0	—	24 19 11	—	
1854	8,066 3 37	9,278 0 8	1 3 0	—	—	—	
1855	8,066 3 37	9,323 11 8	1 3 1	—	—	—	
1856	8,066 3 37	9,355 4 1	1 4 5	—	—	—	
1857	8,066 3 37	9,878 18 8	1 4 5	—	—	—	
1858	8,068 3 30	9,983 14 2	1 4 9	—	—	—	
1859	8,068 3 30	10,024 0 8	1 4 10	—	—	—	
1860	8,072 0 23	10,041 18 5	1 4 10	262 0 3	—	66 9 4	For enfranchisement of copyholds.
1861	8,087 1 10	10,067 4 2	1 4 11	337 7 0	—	90 0 0	For enfranchisement of copyholds.
1862	8,087 1 10	10,075 11 6	1 4 11	309 13 7	—	—	
1863	8,102 1 19	10,104 10 4	1 4 11	280 0 4	—	—	
1864	8,120 3 6	10,225 5 2	1 5 2	—	—	1,163 1 1	Including 300*l.* for marsh land reclaimed.
1865	8,120 3 6	10,252 4 1	1 5 3	—	—	608 2 6	426*l.* 5*s.* for enfranchisement and remainder for marsh land.
1866	8,120 3 6	10,306 16 11	1 5 4	—	—	—	
1867	8,164 0 20	10,418 1 8	1 5 6	—	—	128 19 9	For marsh land, 42 a. 0 r. 16 p., newly enclosed and added.
1868	8,158 1 30	10,548 10 9	1 5 10	—	—	—	
1869	8,158 1 30	10,572 16 3	1 5 11	—	—	—	
1870	8,332 0 37	10,728 18 11	1 5 8	—	—	982 16 0	For buildings and drainage. Bramble Island reclaimed from sea, 172 a. 1 r. 1 p.
1871	8,332 0 37	10,826 12 4	1 5 11	—	—	1,500 6 0	For buildings and drainage.
1872	8,783 0 1	11,269 2 7	1 5 7	—	—	1,117 7 3	For buildings and drainage. Garnham Island reclaimed from sea, 365 a. 1 r. 10 p. Fann's Farm bought, 87 a. 3 r. 9 p.
1873	8,783 0 1	12,125 8 6	1 7 7	—	—	1,156 19 9	For buildings and drainage.
1874	8,783 0 1	12,171 5 3	1 7 8	—	—	—	
1875	8,783 0 1	12,169 7 10	1 7 8	—	—	260 7 2	
1876	8,783 0 1	12,147 2 2	1 7 7	—	—	740 0 0	
1877	8,783 0 1	12,178 16 8	1 7 9	—	—	194 6 1	
1878	8,783 0 1	12,189 16 0	1 7 9	—	—	61 12 0	
1879	8,783 0 1	12,188 2 8	1 7 9	167 15 7	501 16 1	354 7 10	Abatement on half-year only.
1880	8,783 0 1	12,183 7 6	1 7 9	825 9 3	1,009 14 10	—	
1881	8,783 0 1	11,327 8 0	1 5 9	1,254 11 3	1,127 18 4	—	N.B.—Tithes were paid by the tenants until 1888, since which time they have been partly, and are now (1892) wholly paid by the Hospital.
1882	8,790 1 30	10,300 12 3	1 3 4	1,291 9 6	698 1 9	—	
1883	8,790 1 30	9,999 4 8	1 2 9	1,095 9 10	683 5 9	—	
1884	8,790 1 30	9,148 2 5	1 0 9	1,244 0 6	548 3 5	—	
1885	8,790 1 30	7,690 5 4	0 17 6	1,228 15 4	355 18 4	—	3 farms in hand.
1886	8,790 1 30	7,886 19 3	0 16 9	1,436 16 8	202 17 0	—	4 do.
1887	8,790 1 30	6,019 11 10	0 13 8	1,201 2 11	155 2 4	—	5 do.
1888	8,790 1 30	5,676 19 8	0 12 11	976 3 3	—	—	4 do.
1889	8,790 1 30	5,883 15 3	0 13 4	1,042 7 11	—	—	4 do. The Farms in hand are carried on by the Hospital.
1890	8,790 1 30	5,798 0 4	0 13 2	755 8 10	—	—	4 do.
1891	8,790 1 30	7,180 13 8	0 16 4	632 17 2	70 0 0	—	5 do. Rent includes 850*l.* for farms in hand.
1892	8,790 1 30	7,392 10 4	0 16 9	858 5 8	510 8 5	—	5 do. Rent includes 1,090*l.* for farms in hand.
1893	8,790 1 30	6,771 1 0	0 15 4	997 4 4	1,320 9 10	—	

Appendix A., IX.—3.

IX.—3.

GUY'S HOSPITAL.

Herefordshire Estates.

Statement of Rents for Years 1801 to 1892.

(*Handed in by Mr. E. H. Lushington. See Question* 1687.)

Year (ending Michaelmas).	Acreage.	Rent.	Rent per Acre.	Arrears (if over 200*l*.).	Temporary Abatement.	Improvements (New Buildings, Drainage, &c.).	Remarks.
	A. R. P.	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	
1801	—	5,971 8 4	—	1,431 18 2	—	—	
1802	—	5,971 8 4	—	1,346 9 5	—	—	
1803	—	5,962 1 4	—	1,311 17 10	—	—	
1804	—	5,964 5 4	—	1,243 6 4	—	—	
1805	—	6,014 0 10	—	1,197 18 9	—	—	
1806	—	5,858 8 10	—	1,626 16 1	—	—	Widenham and Welchwood Farms sold for 4,250*l.*
1807	—	6,249 4 4	—	2,225 8 7	—	105 0 0	Green and Pennocks' Farms sold for 6,175*l.*
1808	9,220 (about)	6,180 3 4	0 13 4	1,344 19 1	—	—	
1809	,, ,,	5,681 5 4	0 12 3	881 12 6	—	—	
1810	,, ,,	6,843 19 4	0 14 0	689 16 3	—	—	
1811	,, ,,	7,775 12 10	0 16 11	319 7 3	—	—	
1812	,, ,,	7,958 19 7	0 17 2	216 16 4	—	—	
1813	,, ,,	8,402 6 4	0 18 2	—	—	—	
1814	,, ,,	8,671 4 7	0 18 9	—	—	—	
1815	,, ,,	8,818 9 9	0 19 2	532 15 9	—	—	
1816	,, ,,	8,935 16 9	0 19 4	1,009 14 0	—	—	
1817	,, ,,	8,930 4 9	0 19 4	1,074 11 9	—	—	
1818	,, ,,	8,815 4 3	0 19 2	1,448 18 6	—	—	
1819	,, ,,	8,500 15 3	0 18 5	1,343 11 9	—	—	
1820	,, ,,	8,840 2 9	0 18 1	1,300 5 5	—	—	
1821	,, ,,	8,462 3 9	0 18 4	1,298 16 3	576 15 0	—	
1822	,, ,,	8,512 6 3	0 18 5	2,395 14 6	1,181 5 0	—	
1823	,, ,,	7,223 8 9	0 15 8	1,906 16 6	—	—	
1824	,, ,,	7,225 6 6	0 15 8	1,242 0 2	—	—	
1825	,, ,,	7,301 17 0	0 15 10	1,151 3 4	—	—	
1826	,, ,,	7,371 0 8	0 15 11	1,186 4 9	—	—	
1827	,, ,,	7,397 13 1	0 16 0	836 10 0	—	—	
1828	,, ,,	7,411 12 9	0 16 0	556 10 11	—	—	
1829	,, ,,	7,422 19 6	0 16 1	844 8 5	—	—	
1830	,, ,,	7,440 14 1	0 16 1	1,085 12 1	—	—	
1831	,, ,,	7,395 12 7	0 16 0	1,066 0 1	—	—	
1832	,, ,,	7,397 14 1	0 16 0	1,147 6 8	—	880 0 0	
1833	,, ,,	7,371 5 1	0 15 11	943 6 1	—	—	
1834	,, ,,	7,375 11 0	0 15 11	1,080 9 1	—	104 17 10	
1835	,, ,,	7,366 16 11	0 15 11	720 0 11	—	—	
1836	,, ,,	7,387 13 1	0 16 0	484 1 10	—	—	
1837	,, ,,	7,400 4 3	0 16 0	499 14 2	—	—	
1838	,, ,,	7,422 4 11	0 16 1	550 3 6	—	240 0 0	
1839	,, ,,	7,437 13 3	0 16 1	602 19 5	—	956 0 0	
1840	,, ,,	7,442 16 7	0 16 1	608 6 11	—	—	
1841	9,202 3 17	8,822 17 10	0 18 1	283 14 3	—	244 14 0	N.B.—The small alterations in the acreage of this estate are due to exchanges, enclosures of common and waste land, &c.
1842	9,209 2 37	9,005 11 7	0 19 6	286 17 0	—	—	
1843	9,208 2 17	9,263 17 7	1 0 2	250 2 9	—	—	
1844	9,207 0 30	9,561 10 1	1 0 9	—	—	—	
1845	9,217 2 26	9,525 5 1	1 0 8	—	—	139 16 5	
1846	9,217 2 26	9,545 6 4	1 0 8	—	—	—	
1847	9,281 2 24	9,627 18 11	1 0 9	—	—	867 17 6	Bower's Farm, &c., purchased. 56 a. 3 r. 17 p.
1848	9,291 2 0	9,727 8 2	1 0 11	—	—	1,556 10 0	
1849	9,291 2 21	9,806 7 10	1 1 1	—	—	700 0 0	
1850	9,277 2 0	9,839 11 3	1 1 2	—	150 0 0	—	
1851	9,273 1 0	9,778 13 7	1 1 1	—	1,072 0 0	—	
1852	9,271 3 0	9,398 4 3	1 0 3	202 10 7	795 0 0	1,475 7 0	
1853	9,474 2 23	9,015 1 11	0 19 0	—	268 0 0	—	New survey of the whole estate.
1854	9,456 0 36	9,004 6 9	0 19 0	—	—	—	
1855	9,468 2 2	9,060 3 2	0 19 1	—	—	—	
1856	9,469 1 12	9,156 17 2	0 19 3	—	—	—	New valuation of estate.
1857	9,471 2 21	10,161 14 0	1 1 5	—	—	273 12 6	Half-year at increased rents.
1858	9,472 0 24	11,095 6 6	1 3 5	—	—	1,192 10 0	Whole year at increased rents.
1859	9,478 3 9	11,437 13 11	1 4 1	—	—	936 0 0	
1860	9,018 2 9	11,506 13 7	1 5 6	—	—	6,523 6 10	Outlay for drainage—Alterynnis and Walterstone 458 a. 1 r. 24 p., sold this year with perpetual rentcharge.
1861	8,549 3 1	11,844 19 6	1 6 6	—	—	1,639 4 11	Abbey Dore Farms sold 457 a. 1 r. 39 p.
1862	8,533 3 36	11,417 3 10	1 6 8	—	—	1,833 6 5	

Appendix A., IX.—3 and X.

Year (ending Michaelmas).	Acreage.	Rent.	Rent per Acre.	Arrears (if over 200*l*.).	Temporary Abatement.	Improvements (New Buildings, Drainage, &c.).	Remarks.
	A. R. P.	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	
1863	8,583 3 16	11,616 19 0	1 7 2	—	—	1,155 7 3	Black House, Llangarren, purchased, 61 a. 2 r. 0 p.
1864	8,588 0 30	11,698 17 6	1 7 4	382 13 6	—	1,859 11 4	
1865	8,600 0 17	11,975 6 4	1 7 10	–	—	1,412 2 7	
1866	8,598 2 19	11,646 8 5	1 7 3	—	—	669 10 5	
1867	8,619 3 22	11,979 19 3	1 7 9	0 10 6	—	645 2 8	
1868	8,618 2 3	12,042 6 5	1 7 11	0 0 6	—	458 15 9	
1869	8,606 3 35	12,108 17 7	1 8 2	2 0 0	—	735 2 3	
1870	8,581 1 24	12,103 15 1	1 8 3	—	—	725 4 6	
1871	8,587 3 34	12,117 6 7	1 8 3	219 14 6	—	117 10 0	
1872	8,563 0 3	12,183 9 0	1 8 5	474 10 6	—	335 10 2	
1873	8,563 1 19	12,180 16 6	1 8 5	—	—	99 1 0	
1874	8,564 2 15	12,150 15 8	1 8 4	390 3 0	—	555 8 9	
1875	8,564 2 15	12,125 11 0	1 8 4	467 4 0	—	610 9 4	
1876	8,566 0 37	12,165 17 8	1 8 5	240 6 0	—	732 15 6	
1877	8,563 3 21	12,153 2 0	1 8 4	None.	—	443 13 3	
1878	8,559 0 2	12,035 7 5	1 8 0	0 15 5	—	1,260 7 5	
1879	8,558 2 17	12,067 7 3	1 8 1	306 7 3	—	1,200 0 0	
1880	8,566 2 18	11,979 16 2	1 7 11	412 12 7	1,046 13 0	182 5 10	
1881	8,566 3 13	11,933 7 1	1 7 10	267 6 0	1,541 16 6	165 18 8	
1882	8,568 0 26	11,769 18 9	1 7 5	380 17 6	1,403 4 0	—	N.B.—Tithes are paid by the tenants on this estate.
1883	8,566 1 25	11,690 1 1	1 7 3	—	1,897 19 0	200 0 0	
1884	8,554 1 12	11,665 5 10	1 7 3	638 9 3	1,332 8 0	1,505 8 11	
1885	8,554 1 12	11,501 8 8	1 6 10	877 4 8	1,223 19 0	—	
1886	8,554 1 12	11,260 7 9	1 6 4	566 6 6	2,003 10 0	82 1 0	
1887	8,554 1 12	11,062 6 9	1 5 10	594 2 5	2,054 4 6	550 0 0	
1888	8,554 1 12	10,584 1 5	1 4 8	300 3 0	1,651 5 6	505 14 0	
1889	8,550 0 19	10,126 19 8	1 3 8	—	1,327 14 3	—	
1890	8,549 2 29	9,916 13 2	1 3 2	335 6 10	1,187 11 6	—	
1891	8,549 2 29	9,909 4 5	1 3 2	516 11 11	1,095 17 6	—	
1892	8,549 2 29	9,895 7 10	1 3 1	769 5 1	1,017 3 6	—	
1893	8,549 2 29	10,075 14 7	1 3 7	814 4 9	1,738 14 2	—	

X.

(*Handed in by Mr. Harris. See Question* 3411.)

STATEMENT showing the Occupations of the Persons renting Small Holdings upon Mr. Harris' Estate, with the Extent of Land held by them. The following is a Summary of the Statement:—

——	Acreage.	No.	Holdings.	
			Cultivated Land.	Rough Land
1. Blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers	1 to 32	6	47	25
2. Miller	—	1	10	—
3. Salesmen and railway employees	2½ to 55	3	27½	40
4 Postman	—	1	7	—
5. Agricultural labourers, past or present	1 to 60	9	182	42
6. Agricultural labourers combining other occupations	10 to 16	2	26	—
7. Widow	—	1	7	—
		23	306½	107

Appendix A.,
XI. and XII.

XI.

Analysis of the Murrumbridgee Soils, New South Wales, and Report thereon, by Dr. Voelcker.

(*Handed in by Mr. W. J. Harris. See Question* 4762.)

Comparing these with the Mallee soils, they are the richer, decidedly; they are heavier soils, containing more mineral plant food, and more soil nitrogen. They show almost no deficiency, even where the soil has been continuously cropped for 20 years with wheat. They ought to make very suitable wheat soils, and would, I have no doubt, maintain a long succession of crops.

I.—Uncultivated Top Soil.

A rich soil with plentiful nitrogen, potash, lime, and fair proportion of phosphoric acid.

II.—River Flat.

A heavier soil than No. I., with more lime, and equally rich in phosphoric acid and nitrogen. It has a remarkably large amount of potash. The richest of the three samples.

III.—Top Soil after 20 Wheat Crops.

As compared with soils I. and II., this one shows some depreciation resulting from the continued cropping, more especially in the lime, nitrogen, and phosphoric acid. There is hardly a *marked* deficiency, however, of any constituent, though a process of exhaustion is clearly going on. A soil must have been rich originally to have shown so little diminution of quality.

Soils from Murrumbridgee Country, New South Wales.	Soils dried at 212° F.		
	I.	II.	III.
	Uncultivated Top Soil.	River Flat Top Soil.	Top Soil of Field after 20 Years Wheat Cropping.
*Organic matter and watery combination.	3·42	8·88	3·36
Ferric oxide	3·60	6·03	2·27
Ferrous oxide	·20	—	·11
Alumina	8·60	12·59	4·18
Lime	·46	·85	·37
Magnesia	·60	1·45	·73
Potash	·55	1·05	·58
Soda	·24	·07	·18
Phosphoric acid	·13	·13	·10
Sulphuric acid	·07	—	·02
Insoluble silicates and sand	82·13	68·95	88·10
	100·00	100·00	100·00
*Containing nitrogen	·16	·17	·10
†Equal to carbonate of lime	·82	1·52	·66

XII.

Statement showing Acreage of Wheat grown by Joseph Martin in the counties of Cambridge and Norfolk from 1854 to 1892 inclusive, setting forth the average yield per acre and average price per Coomb of 18 st.

(Handed in by Mr. Joseph Martin. *See* question 4063.)

Year.	Acreage.			Per acre average yield.			Average price per coomb.
	A.	R.	P.	cbs.	bus.	pks.	£ s. d.
1854	350	—	—	9	1	1	1 18 7
1855	344	2	—	7	2	2	1 15 3
1856	432	—	—	9	2	½	1 8 6½
1857	400	—	—	10	1	½	1 3 3
1858	408	—	—	8	3	—	1 0 7¾
1859	382	—	—	7	1	¾	1 1 9
1860	391	—	—	6	3	3½	1 7 9½
1861	373	2	9	7	1	—	1 7 9½
1862	373	—	32	7	2	—	1 3 0
1863	356	3	17	11	—	—	0 19 4
1864	504	2	38	10	3	3	0 19 7
1865	509	3	5	6	2	2	1 2 5
1866	474	1	1	8	3	5	1 9 10
1867	537	2	18	7	2	1½	1 14 2½
1868	580	2	26	9	3	1½	1 4 9¾
1869	586	2	38	8	—	—	1 2 1½
1870	565	—	22	9	1	½	1 6 2
1871	554	3	20	6	2	—	1 6 0
1872	583	3	22	7	—	3½	1 5 8
1873	547	1	37	7	1	1½	1 10 8
1874	556	—	38	9	—	½	1 1 11
1875	512	3	32	7	—	—	1 2 7½
1876	537	0	31	8	2	—	1 7 4½
1877	620	0	6	7	2	2	1 5 0½
1878	598	3	14	7	3	2	1 0 1½
1879	576	2	20	5	3	1½	1 1 11½
1880	642	2	25	6	1	3	1 0 2
1881	566	2	21	5	3	3	1 0 [illegible]½
1882	596	2	5	8	1	1	1 1 1
1883	712	—	35	8	1	1	0 19 3¾
1884	830	2	10	8	2	—	0 16 5
1885	797	1	1	10	2	2	0 15 6¾
1886	759	3	35	7	1	3	0 16 9
1887	752	1	34	9	2	3	0 15 7½
1888	731	2	36	8	2	½	0 16 0½
1889	518	2	26	7	—	—	0 14 5
1890	543	3	38	8	1	—	0 17 11
1891	543	0	35	8	1	2	0 17 6½
1892	525	1	2	5	3	1½	0 12 8

XIII.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER.

Rentals (of three properties) of 1880 and 1892 compared.

Also **Capital Expenditure** (on same properties) 1879–1891 (inclusive), with interest at 5 per cent. on such Expenditure.

(*Handed in by Sir Gardner Engleheart. See Questions* 4106, 4148, 4167, 4178.)

Estate.	Acreage.	Gross Rental 1880, less authorised allowance.	Outlay (capital) in Improvements 1879–1891 (inclusive).	Rental of 1880 interest at 5 per cent. on outlay in Column 3.	Gross Rental 1892, less authorised allowance.	Per-centage *decrease* on comparison of Columns 4 and 5.
	A.	£	£	£	£	Per Cent
Needwood (Staffordshire) -	3,949	5,484	5,803	5,774	5,178	10¼
Myerscough Park (Lancashire) -	1,368	*2,572 (*1886*)	14,379	3,291	2,201, After deducting average annual cost of pumping engine, 164*l*.	33⅛
Fen Farms (Westville, etc.) (Lincolnshire).	876	1,076	2,018	1,177	944	19⅘

* This is the rental of the Duchy Lessee in *1886* (when the property was held from the Duchy on a beneficial lease). Column 2, relating to *this estate*, therefore refers to 1886 (instead of to 1880). The comparison in Column 6 is between *1886* and 1892, and the outlay in Column 3 is for the period 1885–91 inclusive.

XIV.

Expenditure upon **Agricultural Property.**

(*Handed in by Sir Gardner Engleheart. See Questions* 4240, 4361.)

Date.	Capital.		Revenue.
	New Buildings, &c.	Drainage.	Repairs, &c.
	£	£	£
1880 - - -	1,775	253	822
1881 - - -	598	1,429	978
1882 - - -	639	529	710
1883 - - -	1,166	508	1,134
1884 - - -	1,377	634	661
1885 - - -	607	65	771
1886 - - -	179	80	629
1887 - - -	11,512	108	2,599
1888 - - -	4,797	4,223	2,047
1889 - - -	5,460	159	1,867
1890 - - -	3,592	181	1,921
1891 - - -	4,645	330	1,718
1892 - - -	4,555	107	2,128
	40,902	8,606	17,985

Appendix A., XV.

XV.

Duchy Acreage in 1892.

(*Handed in by Sir Gardner Engleheart. See Question* 4117.)

County.	Agricultural					Total Agricultural.	Houses and Buildings.		Woods.	Grand Totals.
	Purely.	Residential.	Beneficial.	Cottages with under 2 acres let separately from Farms.	Land in Hand.		Town Houses and Shops, Colliery Land at rack rent.	Building Land on Ground Rent.		
	A.	A.	A.	A.	A.	A.	A.	A.	A.	A.
Bucks	206	—	—	—	—	206	—	—	—	206
Chester	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Derby	166	—	20	—	—	186	1	—	—	187
Essex	40	—	—	—	—	40	—	—	—	40
Lancaster	1,382	1	71	—	—	1,454	—	45	—	1,499
Leicester	3	—	—	—	—	3	1	—	—	4
Lincoln	1,323	28	—	3	—	1,354	2	—	—	1,356
Middlesex	1,300	349	1,158	—	—	2,807	3	112	140	3,062
Norfolk	800	—	—	—	4,261	5,061	—	—	—	5,061
Northants	1,017	—	—	—	—	1,017	—	—	—	1,017
Notts	156	—	—	—	—	156	—	—	—	156
Stafford	3,635	306	—	8	—	3,949	160	2	1,147	5,258
York	7,134	92	9	23	—	7,258	—	80	1,053	15,417
„ Moorland Farms	6,954	—	—	—	72	7,026	—	—		
Total	24,116	776	1,258	34	4,333	30,517	168	239	2,340	33,264

Surface Gross Rental in 1892.

	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Bucks	90	—	—	—	—	90	—	—	—	90
Chester	—	—	—	—	—	—	30	—	—	30
Derby	109	—	5	—	—	114	10	—	—	142
Essex	100	—	—	—	—	100	—	—	—	100
Lancaster	2,391	15	168	—	—	2,574	—	702	—	3,276
Leicester	5	—	—	—	—	5	221	—	—	226
Lincoln	1,507	60	—	94	—	1,661	189	—	—	1,850
Middlesex	1,361	1,382	885	—	—	3,628	6,594	12,717	—	22,939
Norfolk	500	—	—	—	—	500	—	—	—	500
Northants	1,071	—	—	—	—	1,071	—	—	—	1,071
Notts	200	—	—	—	—	200	—	—	—	200
Stafford	4,504	673	—	49	—	5,226	737	10	—	5,973
York	7,894	1,123	4	223	—	9,244	—	1,534	—	11,448
„ Moorland Farms	670	—	—	—	—	670	—	—	—	
Total	20,402	3,253	1,062	366	—	25,083	7,781	14,963	—	*47,827

* Exclusive of fee farm and quit rents and the rents of quarries, foreshore and encroachments.

Appendix A., XVI. and XVII.

XVI.

SIZES of AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS (including Cottages let separately from Farms.)

(*Handed in by Mr. Bolden. See Question* 4234.)

County.	Under 1 Acre.	1 and under 2.	2 and under 5.	5 and under 10.	10 and under 20.	20 and under 50.	50 and under 75.	75 and under 100.	100 and under 150.	150 and under 200.	200 and under 300.	300 and under 400.	400 and under 500.	Above 500.	Total.
Bucks	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Derby	1	1	—	—	—	2	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
Essex	1	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
Lancaster	1	—	—	—	2	1	3	4	2	2	—	1	—	—	16
Leicester	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Lincoln	27	4	7	8	6	2	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	A. 1 (876)	58
Middlesex	—	—	2	—	3	1	—	2	4	1	3	2	1	—	19
Norfolk	—	—	1	—	—	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	A. 1 (610)	6
Northants	1	1	6	1	1	2	—	—	—	1	2	1	—	—	16
Notts	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Stafford	7	—	6	1	4	6	1	3	4	2	4	1	1	A. 1 (509)	41
York	37	3	12	17	11	11	5	1	7	7	8	1	1	4 { 632 5,294† 676 1,660†	125
Totals	75	9	35	27	28	28	14	11	18	15	17	6	3	7	293
	(All yearly.)*	(8 yearly.)*	(26 yearly.)	(20 yearly.)	(18 yearly.)	(20 yearly.)	(11 yearly.)	(7 yearly.)	(11 yearly.)	(9 yearly.)	(11 yearly.)	(3 yearly.)	(1 yearly.)	(2 yearly A632 5,294	(222 yearly.)

Total of small Holdings (under 50 acres), 202, whereof 167 are yearly (or less) tenancies.

* Of the 84 tenancies under 2 acres 62 are cottages with land attached.

† Including 6,954 acres of moorland.

XVII.

ABSTRACT OF PARTICULARS of LORD WANTAGE'S ESTATE in NORTHAMPTONSHIRE arranged in Triennial Periods, 1872–74; 1880–82; 1888–90; 1891–93.

(*Handed in by Lord Wantage. See Ques.* 4544.)

—	1872–74.		1880–82.		1888–90.		1891–93.	
Gross Receipts.	£ 187,968		£ 171,250		£ 106,834		£ 98,089	
Expenditure :—	£	Per-centage of Gross Receipts.	£	Per-centage of Gross Receipts.	£	Per-centage of Gross Receipts.	£	Per-centage of Gross Receipts.
Rates and taxes	3,718	1·99	5,076	2·96	4,589	4·30	4,369	4·45
Regular and fixed payments	3,495	1·86	4,347	2·54	5,180	4·85	4,900	4·99
Buildings, and brick and tile yard.	16,334	8·96	29,019	16·95	29,278	27·41	26,666	27·19
Gates and fences	1,797	0·96	6,901	4·03	4,583	4·29	3,704	3·78
Woods and plantations	1,713	0·91	1,879	1·10	1,842	1·72	2,173	2·21
Underdraining	1,454	0·77	11,401	6·66	1,146	1·07	953	0·97
Voluntary payments	95	0·08	101	0·06	2,888	2·70	3,679	3·75
Incidental payments	155	0·08	1,545	0·90	916	0·86	370	0·38
Agency and general, including audits.	6,994	3·72	7,369	4·30	7,149	6·69	5,962	6·08
Total expenditure	36,255	19·30	67,638	39·50	57,571	53·89	52,776	53·80
Net receipts	151,713	80·70	103,612	60·50	49,263	46·11	45,313	46·20
	187,968	100·00	171,250	100·00	106,834	100·00	98,089	100·00

Appendix A., XVIII.

XVIII.

A SLIDING SCALE FOR RENTS.

(*Handed in by Mr. Gilbert Murray. See Ques.* 5166.)

In order to make my scheme for a sliding scale for rents more clearly understood, I ask for permission to further elucidate my views. It must be conceded that any equitable method of fixing the rental value of land must be based on its capabilities of production, this being the first and most important factor in the calculation, and on which the subsequent success or failure of the scheme entirely depends. Take the land in a normal state, without regard to extra manurial condition, which according to the Act of 1883 belongs to the tenant, or to delapidations for which the landlord is entitled to compensation. The valuer carefully inspects each separate enclosure belonging to each holding, making a note of the average quantity of produce it is best adapted to produce; having done this calculating the quantities and attaching to each the market prices of the day are purely clerical; having scheduled the quantities under the different heads a permanent standard is arrived at, forming a basis on which all future fluctuations of prices are calculated; by this means the average gross value per acre of the produce is ascertained. The next factor is the cost of production which varies on almost every occupation. The items which go to make up the gross cost of production are manurial labour, horse labour, seeds and plants, tradesmen's bills, interest on capital, tenants' remuneration, insurance of stocks and crops, and depreciation on implements and machinery, collectively these are the out-goings which, deducted from the gross value of the produce per acre, the balance is the amount available for rent, rates and tithe, the latter in whatever way they are put, are landlords' payments. This may fairly be taken as a fixed amount, the only quantity liable to fluctuation is manual labour and although wages have nominally increased during the past 15 years, the cost of labour per acre has decreased owing to the more general use of labour-saving machinery. Practical experience confirms that this is the only correct and fair method of ascertaining the rental value of land; if applied to a sliding scale it will mete out equal justice to owner and occupier. The tenant has a free hand for the exercise of his skill and judgment and the expenditure of his capital in increasing the productive power of the soil to its utmost limit without the fear of an increase of rent, which is ruled by the average prices of the year calculated on the normal produce of the land which still remains a fixed quantity. Here we have an incentive to an improved system of cultivation by which the land would be stimulated and the produce greatly increased. So far the rent has been fixed on the basis of its present capabilities of production. In many cases drainage and buildings are necessary in order to fully develop the natural capabilities of the soil. In every case it is essential that all estate improvements should be done by the landlord. Arrangements should be made that would enable the owner to borrow money for legitimate estate improvements at a rate of 3 to 3½ per cent., to reimburse principal and interest within a fixed period. The interest on the outlay on drainage and buildings should be paid by the tenant. Wherever the money is advanced, either by the Government or a financial company, the work should be carried out under inspection.

In order more clearly to explain my views as to the system to be adopted in fixing produce rents several hypothetical cases are worked out and appended in the hope that the idea may be more easily and clearly understood.

SLIDING SCALE FOR RENTS.

With the tenant the chief grievance is the rent, as this to a certain extent regulates the other payments, nevertheless there are other important matters which press more or less heavily upon him. In the matter of rent there are two interests to consider, that of the owner and that of the occupier. Within the last quarter of a century the position of both have considerably changed, the owner has not only to equip the farms with buildings, roads and fences, he has also in most cases to keep them in a tenantable state of repair, leaving the capital of the tenant free for the cultivation of the land.

During a cycle of prosperous times rents sometimes rise beyond the normal standard of values, whilst in seasons of depression they fall below their legitimate values. In order to protect the interests both of owner and occupier I submit a scheme that will meet out equal justice to both.

As a practical illustration of my meaning I will select a representative mixed farm of 260 acres in a Midland county consisting of:

60 acres tillage,
50 ,, feeding land.
100 ,, good dairy land.
50 ,, ordinary store pasture.
260

The tillage land would be worked as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
1. Oats, 10 acres, produce 36 bushels, 2*s.* 6*d.*, straw, 25 cwt. 3*s.* -	8	5	0
2. Wheat, 10 acres, produce 26 bushels, 4*s.*, straw, 30 cwt., 3*s.* 6*d.*	10	0	9
3. Roots, 10 acres, produce 140 lbs. mutton at 7*d.*, 20 lbs. wool, 1*s.* -	5	1	8
4. Barley, 10 acres seeded down, 32 bushels, 3*s.* 6*d.*, 25 cwt. straw, 2*s.*	8	2	0
5. Seeds, first year, 10 acres produce 120 lbs. mutton, 7*d.*, 15 lbs. wool, 1*s.* - - - - -	4	5	0
6. Seeds, second year, 10 acres produce 140 lbs. mutton, at 7*d.* 20 lbs. wool, 1*s.* - - - - -	5	1	8
The gross value of the crops on the tillage land is - - -	£41	4	4

1-6th = 6*l.* 17*s.* 4½*d.*

	£	s.	d.
60 acres arable average produce per acre 6*l.* 17*s.* 4½*d.* - -	412	2	6
50 acres feeding land, 180 lbs. beef at 6½*d.*, 4*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* - -	243	0	0
100 acres good dairy land, 180 Imperial gallons of milk at 7*d.*, 5*l.* 5*s.* - - - - -	525	0	0
50 acres store pasture, 120 lbs. meat at 6½*d.*, 3*l.* 5*s.* - -	162	10	0
	£1,342	12	6

According to this calculation the gross returns are 1,342*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* on the 260 acres, or 5*l.* 3*s.* 3¼*d.* per acre; from this the following deductions must be made, cost of manual labour, horse labour, seeds and plants, tradesmen's bills, insurance of stock and crops, interest on capital embarked in the stocking and cultivation of the farm, tenant's remuneration for his labour and superintendence, which in this case would amount to 3*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* per acre deducted from 5*l.* 3*s.* 3¼*d.* the average value of the produce would leave 2*l.* 1*s.* 9¼*d.* to cover rent, rates and tithe; the last two are an unknown quantity, and would be dealt with as they arose. Here you have the phases of a normal standard of production entirely independent of the fluctuations of prices; these rise and fall with the state of the markets, whilst the original calculations as to the productive capabilities of the land remains undisturbed. Through the exercise of skill and intelligence and the application of capital to the land may increase, or as some enthusiasts affirm, double, the produce of the land; unless there is a rise in prices the rent is not increased a single penny. There are those who clamour for continuous occupation and free sale, this to the extent of a 21 years' lease with breaks at seven and 14 years. Then as to compensation we should have a reliable landmark with which to compare the present state of production with the state of the land on entry, the increase or decrease of production would be taken at its value to an incoming tenant; the capitalised value of the increase would be the measure of the tenant's culture and manurial residuum.

Appendix A., XVIII.

No. 1 Crop 1892.

	£	s.	d.
Total returns on 260 acres	1,342	12	6

or an average of 5*l.* 3*s.* 3½*d.* per acre.

Cost of cultivation and management:—

	£	s.	d.
Manual labour, per acre	1	3	0
Horse labour, per acre	0	9	0
Seed corn, seeds, and plants, per acre	0	3	0
Tradesmen's bills	0	3	6
Interest on capital, 8*l.* at 5 per cent.	0	8	0
Tenants' remuneration for skill and labour employed, 5 per cent. on 8*l.*	0	8	0
Insurance of stock and crops	0	4	0
Depreciation on implements and machinery	0	3	0
	3	1	6

	£	s.	d.
Average per acre	5	3	3½
Deduct from gross returns of expenses of production as above	3	1	6
	2	1	9½

The balance is rent, rates, and tithes payable by the tenant if the landlord pays the outgoings, if not tithes and rates must be deducted. In every case tithe is now a landlord's payment.

Gross rental, 543*l.* 14*s.* 2*d.*

No. 2 Crop 1893.

In this case we have a drop in prices, not generally but in some descriptions of produce.

	£	s.	d.
One course, 10 acres oats, 36 bushels at 2*s.* 6*d.*, 25 cwt. straw at 2*s.* 6*d.*	7	12	6
Two course, 10 acres wheat, 26 bushels at 3*s.* 6*d.*, 30 cwt. straw at 2*s.* 6*d.*	8	6	0
Three course, 10 acres barley, 32 bushels at 2*s.* 3*d.*, 25 cwt, straw at 2*s.*	7	14	0
Four course, 10 acres roots, 140 lbs. mutton at 7*d.*, 20 lbs. wool at 10*d.*	4	18	4
Five course, 10 acres first seeds, 120 lbs. mutton at 7*d.*, 15 lbs. wool at 10*d.*	4	2	6
Six course, 10 acres second seeds, 140 lbs. mutton at 7*d.*, 20 lbs. wool at 10*d.*	4	18	4
	37	11	8

One sixth of this amount is 6*l.* 5*s.* 3*d.*, gross value per acre on 60 acres tillage.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
60 acres tillage, gross value of produce	6	5	3	375	15	0
50 acres feeding land, 180 lbs. beef per acre at 6½*d.*	4	17	6	243	15	0
100 acres good dairy pasture, 180 gallons milk per acre at 6½*d.*	4	17	6	487	0	0
50 acres store pasture, 120 lbs. per acre increase in dead weight at 6*d.*	3	0	0	150	0	0
Gross value of produce				1,256	10	0

Thus reducing the rental to 1*l.* 15*s.* 2½*d.* per acre, or a gross reduction of 86*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* on the rental of 1892—over 15 per cent.

Gross rental for crop 1893, 457*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.*

No. 3 Crop 1894.

Here we have a slight rise in prices, not generally, but on some descriptions of produce.

	£	s.	d.
First course, 10 acres oats, 36 bushels at 3*s.*, 25 cwt. straw at 3*s.*	9	3	0
Second course, 10 acres wheat, 26 bushels at 4*s.* 6*d.*, 30 cwt. straw at 3*s.* 6*d.*	11	2	0
Third course, 10 acres barley, 32 bushels at 3*s.* 9*d.*, 25 cwt. straw at 2*s.*	8	10	0
Fourth course, 10 acres roots=140 lbs. mutton at 7½*d.*, 20 lbs. wool at 1*s.*	5	7	6
Fifth course, 10 acres first years' seeds =120 lbs. mutton at 7½*d.*, 150 lbs. wool at 1*s.*	4	10	0
Sixth course, 10 acres second years' seeds=140 lbs. mutton at 7½*d.*, 20 lbs. wool at 1*s.*	5	7	6
	44	0	0

	£	s.	d.
60 acres tillage, average 7*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, gross value	440	0	0
50 acres feeding pastures, 180 lbs. beef per acre at 7*d.*, 5*l.* 5*s.* per acre, gross	262	10	0
100 acres good dairy land, 180 Imperial gallons milk at 6½*d.*, 4*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* per acre	478	10	0
50 acres store pasture, 120 lbs. increase of deed weight at 5½*d.*, 2*l.* 15*s.* per acre, or gross	137	10	0
	1,318	10	0

Gross value of produce, 1,318*l.* 10*s.*

For crop 1894 we have an increase of 62*l.* over that for crop 1893, and still a drop of 24*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* on crop of 1892.

Rent per acre, 1*l.* 19*s.* 11½*d.*, or a gross rental of 519*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.*

Crop 1893.

220 acres strong land, too strong for the winter feeding of roots on the land.

Worked on a six-course rotation.

	£	s.	d.
First course, 33 acres oats after two years' ley, 36 bushels at 2*s.* 6*d.*, 26 cwt. straw at 3*s.*	5	11	0
Second course, 33 acres barley, 28 bushels at 3*s.* 6*d.*, 24 cwt. straw at 1*s.*	6	2	0
Third course, 33 acres roots, part mangle to be drawn for consumption in yards, part catch crops to be eaten on the land during summer months, 100 lbs. increase in dead weight of meat at 6½*d.*, 18 lbs. wool at 10*d.*	3	9	2
Fourth course, 33 acres wheat=26 bushels at 3*s.* 6*d.*, 30 cwt. straw at 1*s.*	6	1	0
Fifth course, 33 acres, first year's seeds, 100 lbs. mutton at 6½*d.*, 20 lbs. wool at 10*d.*	3	10	10
Sixth course, 33 acres, second years' seeds, 120 lbs. mutton at 6½*d.*, 20 lbs. wool at 10*d.*	4	1	8
	28	15	8

One sixth, 4*l.* 16*s.* gross produce per acre.

Deductions:—

	£	s.	d.
Manual labour	1	5	0
Horse labour	0	12	6
Seeds and plants	0	10	0
Tradesmen's bills	0	3	6
5 per cent. on 6*l.* capital	0	6	0
5 per cent. on 6*l.* tenants' labour and skill	0	6	0
Insurance stock and crops, 2½ per cent. on 6*l.*	0	3	0
Depreciation on 30*s.* value of implements and machinery	0	1	6
	3	7	6

	£	s.	d.
Value of gross produce	4	16	0
Deduct cost of production	3	7	6
	1	9	6

1*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.* to pay rent, tithe, and rates.

Appendix A., XVIII. and XIX.

Crop 1893.

100 acres light sandy soil all under tillage, cultivated on the four-course system.

	£	s.	d.
First course, 25 acres oats after one years' ley, 28 bushels at 2s. 6d., 23 cwt. straw at 1s. - - - -	4	13	0
Second course, 25 acres roots=16 tons per acre 7s. 6d. feeding value - -	6	0	0
Third course, 25 acres barley seeded down, 26 bushels at 3s., 22 cwt. straw at 1s. - - - - - - -	5	0	0
Fourth course, 25 acres seeds, 115 lbs. mutton at 6d., 15 lbs. wool at 10d. -	3	10	0
	19	3	0

Deductions:—

	£	s.	d.
Manual labour - -	1	6	0
Horse labour - -	0	12	0
Seeds and plants - -	0	6	0
Tradesmen's bills - -	0	4	0
Interest on capital, 6l., 5 per cent. - - - -	0	6	0
Tenants' remuneration 5 per cent. on 6l. - -	0	6	0
Insurance on stock and crops 3 per cent. on 6l. -	0	3	7
Depreciation on dead stock, implements, and machinery, 5 per cent. on 1l. 10s. - - - -	0	1	6
	3	5	1

	£	s.	d.
Gross value of produce per acre -	4	15	9
Deduct cost - - - - -	3	5	1
	1	10	8

Rent including tithe and rates, 1l. 10s. 8d.

Crop 1893.

180 acres grass land.

	£	s.	d.
100 acres good feeding land = 160 lbs. beef at 6½d., 40 lbs. mutton at 7d., 8 lbs. wool at 10d. - - -	5	16	8
80 acres good store pasture, 120 lbs. increase of dead weight at 5d., increase in store sheep 40 lbs. at 6d. -	3	10	0
	9	6	8

Average value of produce per acre, 4l. 13s. 4d.

Cost of production:—

	£	s.	d.
Manual labour - -	0	10	0
Horse labour - -	0	1	6
Tradesmen's bills - -	0	0	6
5 per cent. interest on 12l. -	0	12	0
Remuneration for skill and labour, 4 per cent. on 12l.	0	9	6
Insurance 2½ per cent. on 12l.	0	6	0
	1	19	6

	£	s.	d.
Gross return per acre - - -	4	13	4
Deduct cost of production - -	1	19	6
	2	13	10

For rent, tithes, and rates, 2l. 13s. 10d.

XIX.

DUCHY OF CORNWALL ESTATES.

Statement of Outlay of Capital from the Year 1880 to 1892, both inclusive (exclusive of Dartmoor).

(*Handed in by Mr Holzmann. See Question* 5827.)

County.				Amount Expended.			Total.		
Outlay in buildings, water supply, fences, and roads on farms:—				£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
County of Cornwall - - - - - - - - - -				34,594	14	8			
" Devon - - - - - - - - -				5,941	5	1			
" Dorset - - - - - - - - -				9,010	8	7			
" Wilts - - - - - - - -				10,760	8	0			
" Somerset - - - - - - - - -				29,505	4	8			
" Berks - - - - - -				1,027	12	8			
" Lincoln - - - - - - - - - -				722	18	1			
							91,562	11	9
	Extent.			Cost of Drainage.					
Outlay upon drainage works:—	A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.			
County of Cornwall - - - - - - - -	27	2	0	218	0	0			
" Devon - - - - - -	78	0	20	542	1	11			
" Dorset - - - - - - -	746	3	30	4,712	4	3			
" Wilts - - - - - - -	498	0	0	2,738	3	3			
" Somerset - - - - - - -	811	3	6	6,178	18	0			
" Berks - - - - - -	8	3	0	34	4	11			
Total acres - - - - - -	2,171	0	16				14,423	12	4
Total outlay - -							105,986	4	1

Appendix A., XX.

XX.

Statement of Rack Rents receivable during the Year 1892 from Farms of 40 Acres and upwards, held on Leases and Annual Tenancies (excluding Dartmoor).

(*Handed in by Mr. Holmann. See Questions* 5827, 5865.)

County.	Number of Farms.	Extent.			Amount of Rent.			Rate per Acre about		—
		A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.	s.	d.	
County of Cornwall:										
Leaseholds for term certain	7	1,650	2	21	1,517	9	10	18	5	
Improving leases for ditto	2	160	0	0	47	10	0	—		
Annual tenancies	85	11,459	2	13	8,790	2	0	15	5	
Down land let with leases and annual tenancies.	—	749	3	28	114	15	0	—		
Total	94	14,020	0	22	10,469	16	10	—		
County of Devon:										
Leaseholds for term certain	2	394	2	3	310	2	0	15	9	
Beneficial lease for ditto	1	71	0	33	23	12	0	—		
Annual tenancies	17	2,116	2	17	2,150	5	0	20	4	
Total	20	2,582	1	18	2,483	19	0	—		These rents are exclusive of the tithe rent-charge, which is now paid by the Duchy, but is either recoverable on holdings anterior to the Tithe Act, 1891, or has been allowed for under new lettings. The tenants insure the buildings against fire, and undertake to keep them in repair.
County of Dorset:										
Leaseholds for term certain	4	1,927	3	12	2,029	17	6	21	0	
Annual tenancies	10	2,459	0	17	2,290	0	0	18	7	
Total	14	4,386	3	29	4,319	17	6	—		
County of Wilts:										
Annual tenancies	10	2,203	3	16	1,593	12	8	14	6	
Down land let with annual tenancies	—	1,352	3	37	642	0	0	—		
Total	10	3,556	3	13	2,235	12	8	—		
County of Somerset:										
Annual tenancies	49	8,047	3	20	9,473	5	2	23	6	
County of Berks:										
Annual tenancies (total)	2	1,006	3	17	224	13	0	4	5	
County of Lincoln:										
Leasehold for term certain	1	428	1	17	500	0	0	23	4	
Annual tenancy	1	273	3	0	288	0	0	21	1	
Total	2	702	0	17	788	0	0	—		

Appendix A., XXI.

XXI.

COMPARISON between the Years 1878 and 1892 of Acreage and Rents of all Lands in hand (exclusive of Dartmoor).

(*Handed in by Mr. Holmann. See Question* 5838.)

County.	1878.		1892.	
	Acreage.	Rents receivable.	Acreage.	Rents receivable.
	£	£	£	£
Cornwall - - - -	10,171	8,175	16,306	12,597
Devon - - - -	2,144	2,845	2,929	3,041
Dorset - - - -	4,753	8,823	4,738	5,781
Wilts - - - -	3,507	3,714	3,579	2,573
Somerset - - - -	7,755	13,563	8,842	11,602
Berks - - - - -	897	1,590	1,023	296
Lincoln - - - -	743	1,322	743	851
Total - - -	29,970	40,032	38,160	36,741

		1878.		1892.
Rents receivable - - -		£40,032		£36,741
Deduct:				
Allowances off rents - -	£298		£1,031	
Repairs paid for by Duchy -	£439		£1,059	
Loss of interest on outlay for permanent improvements -	Nil.		£5,299	
		£737		7,389
Net rent for 29,970 acres - - - (Equal to 1*l.* 6*s.* 3*d.* per acre.)		39,295	For 38,160 acres - - - (Equal to 15*s.* 4½*d.* per acre, representing a reduction of 41¼ per cent.)	29,352
Arrears accrued during year on rents -		£1,398	£2,733	
Arrears accrued during year on tithe rent-charges recoverable - - -		Nil.	£139	

XXII.

NUMBER of TENANCIES in the Year 1892 according to Acreage, with Total of Rents (excluding Dartmoor).

(*Handed in by Mr. Holmann. See Question* 5889.)

County.	Over 500 Acres.	200 to 500.	100 to 200.	40 to 100.	20 to 40.	1 to 20.	Under 1 Acre.	Total No. of Holdings.	Total Acreage.	Total Rents.			—
									A.	£	s.	d.	
Cornwall:													
In hand - -	3	16	31	44	34	118	122	368	16,306	12,596	17	7	750 acres are down land.
On lives - -	—	—	2	16	11	4	—	33	1,698	106	1	11	
Total - -	3	16	33	60	45	122	122	401	18,004	12,702	19	6	
Devon:													
In hand - -	—	3	4	13	10	12	2	44	2,929	3,040	16	0	
On lives - -	—	—	1	7	5	2	—	15	715	73	1	3	
Total - -	—	3	5	20	15	14	2	59	3,644	3,113	17	3	
Dorset:													
In hand - -	2	8	1	3	4	39	52	109	4,738	5,781	1	7	
On lives - -	—	—	—	—	2	6	5	13	100	53	18	0	
Total - -	2	8	1	3	6	45	57	122	4,838	5,834	19	7	
Wilts:													
In hand - -	3	2	1	4	4	28	338	380	3,579	2,573	1	1	1,353 acres are down land.
On lives - -	—	—	—	—	—	14	46	60	41	6	14	4	
Total - -	3	2	1	4	4	42	384	440	3,620	2,579	15	5	
Somerset:													
In hand - -	2	13	14	20	6	106	180	341	8,842	11,601	14	11	
On lives - -	—	—	3	7	22	125	36	193	2,390	299	13	9	
Total - -	2	13	17	27	28	231	216	534	11,232	11,901	8	8	
Berks:													
In hand - -	1	1	—	—	—	3	—	5	1,023	296	10	0	
Lincoln:													
In hand - -	—	2	—	—	1	1	5	9	743	850	18	0	

TOTALS of TENANCIES in hand.

									A.	£	s.	d.	
Cornwall - - -	3	16	31	44	34	118	122	368	16,306	12,596	17	7	750 acres are down land.
Devon - - -	—	3	4	13	10	12	2	44	2,929	3,040	16	0	
Dorset - - -	2	8	1	3	4	39	52	109	4,738	5,781	1	7	
Wilts - -	3	2	1	4	4	28	338	380	3,579	2,573	1	1	1,358 acres are down land.
Somerset - - -	2	13	14	20	6	106	180	341	8,842	11,601	14	11	
Berks - - -	1	1	—	—	—	3	—	5	1,023	296	10	0	
Lincoln - - -	—	2	—	—	1	1	5	9	743	850	18	0	
Totals - -	11	45	51	84	59	307	699	1,256	38,160	36,740	19	2	

GRAND TOTALS.

									A.	£	s.	d.	
Cornwall - - -	3	16	33	60	45	122	122	401	18,004	12,702	19	6	750 acres are down land.
Devon - - -	—	3	5	20	15	14	2	59	3,644	3,113	17	3	
Dorset - - -	2	8	1	3	6	45	57	122	4,838	5,834	19	7	
Wilts - - -	3	2	1	4	4	42	384	440	3,620	2,579	15	5	1,353 acres are down land.
Somerset - - -	2	13	17	27	28	231	216	534	11,232	11,901	8	8	
Berks - - -	1	1	—	—	—	3	—	5	1,023	296	10	0	
Lincoln - - -	—	2	—	—	1	1	5	9	743	858	18	0	
Totals - -	11	45	57	114	99	458	786	1,570	43,104	37,280	8	5	

Appendix A., XXIII.

XXIII.

STATEMENT handed in by Mr. Jas. Stratton, of Chilcombe, Winchester, showing the Assessments to Poor and Highway Rates on his farm at certain periods. (*See* Question 6773.)

		£	
1872.	Rent	690	
	Tithe	130	(paid by owner)
		820	

				£	s.	d.
	Assessment		634*l*. at 1*s*. 6*d*.	47	11	0
	Do.		634*l*. at 1*s*.	31	14	0
*	Do.	on cottages	17*l*. 2*s*. at 1*s*. 6*d*. (less 30 per cent.)	0	18	0
*	Do.	do.	17*l*. 2*s*. at 1*s*. (do.)	0	11	2
				80	14	2

1873. Same as 1872.

1882. Rent, 510*l*.
Tithe as before.

				£	s.	d.
	Assessment		634*l*. at 1*s*. 3*d*.	39	12	8
	Do.		634*l*. at 1*s*.	31	14	0
*	Do.	on cottages	17*l*. 2*s*. at 1*s*. 3*d*. (less 30 per cent.)	0	14	11
*	Do.	do.	17*l*. 2*s*. at 1*s*. (do.)	0	11	2
				72	12	9

1883. Rent, 510*l*.
Tithe as before.

Rates same as 1882.

1892. Rent and tithe, 352*l*. 10*s*.

				£	s.	d.
	Assessment		253*l*. 13*s*. at 1*s*. 1*d*.	13	14	10
	Do.		253*l*. 13*s*. at 1*s*. 3*d*.	15	17	0
*	Do.	on cottages	17*l*. 2*s*. at 1*s*. 1*d*. (less 30 per cent.)	0	13	0
*	Do.	do.	17*l*. 2*s*. at 1*s*. 3*d*. (do.)	0	15	0
				30	19	10

1893. Rent and tithe, 352*l*. 10*s*.

				£	s.	d.
	Assessment		253*l*. 13*s*. at 1*s*. 6*d*.	19	0	5
	Do.		253*l*. 13*s*. at 1*s*. 1*d*.	13	14	10
*	Do.	on cottages	17*l*. 2*s*. at 1*s*. 6*d*. (less 30 per cent.)	0	18	0
*	Do.	do.	17*l*. 2*s*. at 1*s*. 1*d*. (do.)	0	13	0
				34	6	3

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* In the case of the cottages, Mr. Jas. Stratton is allowed a discount of 30 per cent. because he has agreed to pay on all cottages whether occupied or *unoccupied*.

Appendix A., XXIV. and XXV.

XXIV.

1st Schedule of Estates of which Messrs. Rawlence and Squarey are Agents, 1893.

Handed in by Mr. E. P. Squarey. (*See Question* 7566.)

County.	Area.	Area in Hand.
	Acres.	Acres.
Berkshire - - - -	13,194	1,049
Buckinghamshire - - -	6,363	252
Cambridge - - - -	296	—
Cornwall - - - -	120	—
Derbyshire - - - -	1,800	—
Devonshire - - - -	8,011	—
Dorsetshire - - - -	39.015	560
Gloucestershire - - - -	2,087	—
Hants* - - - - -	16,569	6,400
Hertfordshire - - - -	781	286
Huntingdonshire - - -	7,013	447
Kent - - - - -	3,284	155
Leicestershire - - - -	1,110	—
Lincolnshire - - - -	2,718	—
Middlesex - - - -	3,709	—
Norfolk - - - - -	33	—
Northamptonshire - - -	5,167	—
Oxfordshire - - - -	13,669	446
Shropshire - - - -	2,875	—
Somersetshire - - - -	7,875	—
Staffordshire - - - -	2,776	—
Surrey - - - - -	150	—
Warwickshire - - - -	13,204	711
Wiltshire† - - - -	43,364	4,947
Acres	195,183	15,253

2nd Schedule of Estates of which Messrs. Rawlence and Squarey are consulting Agents.

County.	Area.	Area in Hand.
	Acres.	Acres.
Dorsetshire - - - -	66	—
Hampshire - - - -	5,339	2,000
Wiltshire - - - -	54,564	5,317
Acres	59,969	7,317

It should be noted that some portion of the lands in hand, excluding woodlands, are held in hand for sporting purposes and not intended to be let.

The 2nd Schedule are estates for which we are consulting agents, and when any farms come into hand the management of them devolves on our firm.

It will be observed that the per-centage of the lands in hand is 7·8 per cent., the greatest per-centage being in Wilts and Hants. 10·9 and 38·3 per cent. respectively in Schedule No. 1.

Elias P. Squarey.

February 22, 1894.

XXV.

Scheme prepared by Mr. Scott relative to the appointment of county boards of valuers, and the settlement of compensation for improvements. Reprinted from the Appendix to Mr. Coleman's Report to the Duke of Richmond's Commission, page 22.

Referred to by Mr. Wilson-Fox (*see* question 9,190).

1. That Great Britain be formed into districts, say, for instance, England into 12, and Scotland into six districts.
2. Three arbitrators or commissioners for each *district* to settle all matters (as afterwards specified) by a majority.
3. A commissioner's office for each *district* with clerk attached, in which office all records and papers are to be kept.
4. For court of appeal, the country to be formed into larger *divisions* consisting each of three adjoining *districts*. That the nine commissioners of each of these *divisions* should assemble quarterly to decide, by a majority, all appeals from *district* decisions, and their decisions to be final and subject to no review by any other court.
5. Election of commissioners (under existing circumstances difficult to define). If there were county boards of magistrates and guardians, as has often been proposed, the election would properly devolve upon them. In principle a fair election would be equal numbers chosen by the owners, occupiers, and community respectively. Election to be confirmed by Government through Minister of Agriculture.
6. The amount awarded by the commissioners, either for compensation or depreciation in regard to condition, not to exceed five years' annual rental of the land. The said maximum amount, viz., five years' rental, might be divided in 25 parts, fixing upon 0 as average condition, so that *good condition* might be marked to 25, and *bad condition* to a like figure. That is, each 1 above 0, opposite *good condition*, would mean $\frac{1}{25}$th part of five years' rental compensation to the tenant, and like figures marked in the schedule or form opposite *bad condition* would mean compensation to the owner for depreciation in the same ratio. The basis for estimating the rental to be that of the average of the enclosed land upon the holding.
7. After the passing of these laws or rules any owner or occupier might demand from the commissioners an examination of a holding. If the condition of the holding was found to be above the average it should be so stated in the report. But if the occupier prove that the good condition in whole or in part was caused by himself, it should be so marked, and that part should not be counted against him when he quits. In the same manner when the condition was found to be below the average, it should be so recorded. But if the owner proved that the want of condition or any part of it was caused by the occupier it should be so stated, and at the termination of the tenancy that part should not be counted against the owner. Condition to mean manurial richness or poorness; freedom from twich or weeds or the reverse; fences and roads in good condition or the reverse.
8. Farm buildings. Owner to have the preference in erecting, but when the buildings so provided were considered insufficient by the tenant he might erect buildings himself. Compensation to be given at the termination of the tenancy to the amount which buildings so erected might add to the letting value of the holding, or compensation in the same manner to the landlord to the amount which said buildings might lessen the letting value of the holding. Before the tenant erected buildings he should give the owner notice, and if the owner considered that such erections, or the manner of erecting them, would deteriorate his property, he might apply to the commissioners for a prohibition.
9. The owner to have the preference in executing tile drainage or permanent drainage of any kind, the tenant paying 5 per cent. per annum on the expenditure. But when the drainage so executed was considered insufficient by the tenant he might execute drainage at his own expense, compensation to be given for improvement or allowed for depreciation at the termination of the tenancy to the amount which such drainage might add to or take from the letting value of the holding. The owner to have the power to apply to the commissioners for a prohibition on the plea that his property would be injured by the making of such drains or by the manner of making them. On the other hand, if the owner was being at the cost of drains, the occupier to have the power to apply for a prohibition on the plea that the improvement would not be sufficient to enable him to afford to pay 5 per cent. on the expenditure.
10. If the tenant reclaim waste lands he should receive compensation to the amount which he had added to the letting value of the holding by so doing, or pay to the amount to which he had thereby decreased the letting value.

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* 38·3 per cent.

† 10·9 per cent.

App. A., XXV. and XXVI.

11. If the tenant by tile drainage, or any drainage of a permanent nature, or by manuring, is proved to have increased the letting value of hill, down, or moor land, he should receive compensation to that amount. But if thereby he has deteriorated the letting value he should pay to that amount.

12. In regard to farm buildings, the commissioners should estimate on the principle that the tenant keep in repair the roofs, windows, gutters, and such like (natural wear and tear excepted).

13. If within 18 months of the passing of these rules the commissioners were not asked by the owner or occupier to examine and make a report, the enclosed arable and grass land should be taken as having been 10 below average, that is, 10, bad condition; and when at the termination of the tenancy, or at any other time, a report was made, the compensation for improvement or deterioration should be calculated as if the previous report had been 10 bad condition.

14. The report either at a termination or beginning of a tenancy to serve in the case of either an outgoing or an incoming tenant, unless the farm should have been for a period of not less than 12 months in the occupation of the owner.

15. When a report is made by the commissioners it must apply to the entire holding, and such reports to be looked upon as arbitrations, and no question whatever arising thereon should on any pretence be carried before the law courts.

16. The commissioners' powers not to extend or apply in any way whatever to the question of the regulation of rents between owner and occupier.

17. The commissioners, in calculating compensation or depreciation, to exclude in their estimate any increase or decrease which might have taken place in the value of land from circumstances other than those connected with the cultivation or occupation of it.

18. Fees. Each report or each appeal, 6*d.* per acre for field land and 2*d.* per acre for hill, down, or moor land. Expense of first report to be borne equally by owner and occupier. Expense of appeal to be borne by person who appeals. Fees to be paid to district tax surveyor, who should in the case of each report or appeal receive a note from the commissioners.

19. The commissioners should give their time and attention exclusively to the duties devolving upon them under these provisions. Salaries direct from Government.

XXVI.

Handed in by Mr. W. Smith, M.P.

(*See Question* 9430.)

LAND TENURE (ENGLAND) BILL.

ARRANGEMENT OF CLAUSES.

Clauses.

1. Short title.
2. Extent of Act.

Security of Tenure.

3. Tenant not to be removed except for breach of statutory conditions.
4. Power of resumption by landlord.
5. Condition of re-occupation by tenant.
6. Relief against forfeiture of tenancy.

Reasonable Conditions of Tenancy and Fair Rent.

7. Judicial conditions of tenancy and rent.
8. Increase of judicial rent in respect of landlord's outlay.
9. Damages substituted for penal rents.

Compensation for Improvements.

10. Reference to Land Court on landlord's refusal to consent to first-class improvement.
11. Extension of meaning of tenant's improvement.
12. Valuation of improvements by Land Court.

Power of Tenant to nominate Successor or bequeath Tenancy.

13. Power to nominate successor.
14. Power of tenant to bequeath tenancy by will.

Leaseholders.

15. Lessees and sub-lessees in occupation to be deemed tenants from year to year at expiration of leases.

Regulations as to Common Grazings, Sheep-walks, and Mountain Pastures.

16. Committee of tenants to regulate common grazings, &c.
17. Casual vacancies.
18. On failure of tenants to appoint committee, Land Court may do so.

Land Court.

19. Appointment of Courts and Judge.
20. Selection of assessors.
21. Appointment of assessors and valuers.
22. Forms of procedure.
23. Procedure in fixing fair rent and reasonable conditions of tenancy.
24. Power of Land Court to take evidence and make orders as to expenses.
25. Decision of Court final.
26. Land Court to settle disputes except as otherwise provided.
27. Power for Land Courts to use court houses and employ officers of county courts.
28. Land Courts to make annual report to Parliament.
29. Record of proceedings of Land Courts.
30. Sole referee may be chosen.

Miscellaneous.

31. Avoidance of contracts inconsistent with the Act.
32. Tenancies to which this Act does not apply.
33. Interpretation of terms.

A BILL to amend the Law as to the Tenure of Land in England.

BE it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Short title.

1. This Act and the Agricultural Holdings (England) Act, 1883, shall be construed together as one Act, and this Act may be cited as the Land Tenure (England) Act, 1893.

Extent of Act.

2. This Act shall apply only to England.

Security of Tenure.

A tenant shall not be removed except for breach of statutory conditions.

3. A tenant shall not be compelled to quit the holding of which he is tenant (save as herein-after provided) except in consequence of the breach of some one or more of the conditions following (in this Act referred to as statutory obligations); that is to say,—

(1.) The tenant shall pay his rent at the appointed time, or within *three months* thereafter.

(2.) The tenant shall not, to the prejudice of the interest of the landlord in the holding, commit or permit persistent waste by the dilapidation of buildings or fences, or after notice has been given by the landlord to the tenant not to commit, or to desist from the particular waste specified in such notice by the deterioration of the soil.

(3.) The tenant shall not commit any breach of the judicial conditions of tenancy after notice by the landlord to desist from the particular breach complained of.

(4.) The tenant shall not, without the consent of the landlord in writing, assign or underlet his holding or any part thereof, except as herein-after mentioned.

Agistment or the letting of land for depasturage for a period less than *a year*, the letting of land for the purpose of its being solely used, and which shall be solely used for the growing of potatoes, cabbages, beans, peas, turnips, or other green crops, the land being properly manured, or the letting of cottages with or without gardens or land to labourers employed on the holding, shall not be deemed an assignment or a subletting for the purposes of this Act.

(5.) The tenant shall not do any Act whereby his tenancy shall become vested in an official receiver or trustee in bankruptcy, or in an assignee or trustee for the benefit of creditors.

(6.) The landlord and any person or persons authorised by him in that behalf (he or they making reasonable amends and satisfaction for any damage to be done or occasioned thereby) shall have the right to enter upon the holding for any of the purposes following; (that is to say,)

Mining or taking minerals, or digging or searching for minerals:

Quarrying or taking stone, marble, gravel, sand, brick-clay, fire-clay, or slate; cutting or taking timber, save timber or other trees planted by the tenant or his predecessors in title, or that may be necessary for ornament or shelter:

Opening or making roads, fences, drains, and watercourses:

Viewing or examining at reasonable times the state of the holding, and all buildings or improvements thereon:

And the tenant shall not persistently obstruct the landlord, or any person or persons authorised by him in that behalf as aforesaid, in the exercise of any right conferred by this subsection. All mines and minerals, coals and coal-pits, subject to such rights in respect thereof as the tenant under the contract of tenancy is lawfully entitled to exercise, shall be deemed to be exclusively reserved to the landlord.

Power of resumption by landlord.

4. The landlord may, by *twelve months*' notice to quit, to expire at the same period of the year as the tenancy commenced, determine the tenancy of any holding for any of the following purposes:

(*a.*) For some reasonable and sufficient purpose having relation to the good of the holding or of the estate, including the use of the ground as building ground or for the benefit of the labourers in respect of cottages, gardens, or allotments, or for the purposes of making grants or leases of sites for places of religious worship, schools, dispensaries, or the residencies of ministers of religion or schoolmasters.

(*b.*) For the provision of small holdings in accordance with any Act of the present or any future session of Parliament.

(*c.*) For the bonâ fide purpose of taking any holding, or any part thereof into his own permanent occupation, or for the bonâ fide purpose of permanently letting the same, or any part thereof, to any relative or relatives or member of the family of the landlord, being the father, mother, wife, husband, brother, sister, son, daughter, or son-in-law of the landlord.

Subject to the following conditions:

1. The notice to quit shall state the purpose for which the tenancy is to be determined, and the land intended to be taken;
2. If the notice to quit be given for the purpose of resuming a part of the holding for any of the purposes authorised by this Act, the tenant may require the judicial conditions of tenure and rent of the remainder of the holding to be fixed;
3. The tenant shall be entitled to compensation under the Agricultural Holdings (England) Act, 1883, and this Act, for improvements made by him or his predecessors in title on the land which shall be taken from his holding; and
4. When the land is taken for any purpose other than for the provision of small holdings or for the benefit of labourers in respect of cottages, gardens, or allotments, the tenant shall be entitled to compensation from the landlord for disturbance. Such compensation for disturbance shall, failing agreement with respect thereto, be fixed by the Land Court.

Landlord or his relative to occupy resumed holding for seven years, otherwise tenant entitled to re-occupy or sell the tenancy of the holding.

5.—(1.) If the notice to quit be given under the preceding section for the purpose of the landlord taking the holding or any part thereof into his own occupation, or for the purpose of the landlord letting the same or any part thereof to a relative or member of his family, and the landlord or the relative or member of the family of the landlord to whom the land shall be let shall not continue in the beneficial and bonâ fide occupation of the land so taken for *seven years*, the tenant from whom such land shall have been taken, his executors, administrators, or assigns, shall be entitled to re-occupy such land, or to sell the tenancy thereof, and the tenant, his executors, administrators, or assigns, shall thereupon be entitled to occupy such land on the terms upon which the land was held by the tenant at the time when such notice to quit was given.

(2.) The tenant may, by notice given not less than *two months* before the expiration of the tenancy, apply to the Land Court for a schedule of the agricultural condition and precise state of cultivation of the land to be taken.

(3.) The tenant, his executors, administrators, and assigns, within *one month* after re-occupying land under this section, may by notice apply to the Land Court to determine whether the land, owing to any act or default of the occupier or occupiers, shall have deteriorated in agricultural value since the date of such schedule. The Land Court shall, if the land be so deteriorated or improved, determine the value of such deterioration or improvement, and the landlord shall pay to the tenant the value of any such deterioration, or the tenant shall pay to the landlord the value of such improvement, as the case may be. In any application under this subsection such schedule shall be evidence of the agricultural condition and state of cultivation of the land taken from the tenant at the date of the schedule.

(4.) If any permanent improvements shall have been made on such holding or part thereof, the landlord, on the tenant re-occupying the same, or within *two months* thereafter, may by notice require a new judicial rent to be fixed.

Land Commission may relieve against forfeiture on breach of statutory conditions.

6. Where a notice to quit is served by a landlord upon a tenant of a present or future tenancy for the purpose of compelling the tenant to quit his holding, in consequence of the breach by the tenant of any statutory obligation, the tenant may, at any time before the commencement of an ejectment founded on such notice to quit, apply to the Land Court for an order restraining the landlord from taking further proceedings to enforce such notice to quit.

(1.) If the Land Court is of opinion that adequate satisfaction for the breach of such obligation can be made by the payment of damages to the landlord, and that the tenant may justly be relieved from the liability to be compelled to quit his holding in consequence of such breach the Land Commission may make an order restraining further proceedings on the notice to quit, upon the payment by the tenant of such sum for damages as they shall then, or after due inquiry, award to the landlord in satisfaction for the breach of the statutory obligation, together with the costs incurred by the landlord in respect to the notice to quit, and the proceedings subsequent thereto.

(2.) If the Land Court is of opinion that no appreciable damage has accrued to the landlord from the breach of such obligation, and that the tenant may justly be relieved as aforesaid, they may make an order restraining further proceedings on the notice to quit, upon such costs as to costs as they may think just.

(3.) The service of a notice to quit, to enforce which no proceedings are taken by the landlord, or the proceedings to enforce which are restrained by the Land Court, shall not operate to determine the tenancy.

Reasonable Conditions of Tenancy and Fair Rent.

Judicial conditions of tenancy and rent.

7.—(1.) Either party to a contract of tenancy, present or future, may apply to the Land Court to fix reasonable conditions of tenancy and a fair rent to be paid by the tenant to the landlord for the holding, and thereupon the Court, after hearing the parties and considering all the circumstances of the case, holding, and district, and particularly after taking into consideration any permanent or unexhausted improvements on the holding and suitable thereto which have been executed or paid for by the tenant or his predecessors, may determine what is such fair rent and what are such reasonable conditions of tenancy, and pronounce and order accordingly.

(2.) The rent fixed by the Court (in this Act referred to as the judicial rent) shall be deemed to be the rent payable by the tenant as from the period commencing at the rent day next succeeding the decision of the Court, and shall come in place of the existing rent, and, save by mutual agreement, the judicial rent shall not be altered for a period of *five years* from such term.

(3.) Where the Land Court shall fix a rent which shall be less in amount than the existing rent, the tenant shall be entitled, at the next payment of rent, to deduct from the amount of the judicial rent such sum or sums as he may have paid over and above the amount of the judicial rent in respect of the period between the date of the notice of application to fix the fair rent and the date when such rent was fixed.

(4.) When an application is lodged with the Land Court to fix a fair rent and reasonable conditions of tenancy it shall be in the power of the Land Court, either under the same or under another application of the tenant, to stay all proceedings for the removal of the tenant in respect of non-payment of rent till the said application is finally determined, upon such terms as to payment of rent or otherwise as they shall think fit.

Judicial rent may be increased in respect of capital laid out by landlord.

8. The rent of any holding subject to statutory conditions of tenancy and rent may be increased in respect of capital laid out by the landlord under agreement with the tenant to such an amount as may be agreed upon between the landlord and tenant and sanctioned by the said commission, and the landlord shall have the same rights and powers to enforce the due fulfilment of such agreement as to recover payment of the rent.

Damages substituted for penal rents.

9. If any claim is made by a landlord on a tenant, under a present or future contract of tenancy, for any penal or additional rent in respect of breach of or deviation from any condition or covenant in the contract, the claim shall be limited to the damages suffered by the landlord from any such default, and that notwithstanding any provision in the contract of tenancy.

Amendment of Law as to Compensation for Improvements.

Power to refer to Land Commission on landlord's refusal to consent to first-class improvement.

10. Whenever a tenant shall intend to execute any improvement mentioned in the first part of the First Schedule to the Agricultural Holdings (England) Act, 1883, and shall give notice in writing to the landlord or his duly authorised agent of such intention, and shall in such notice specify the particular improvement or improvements intended, and the estimated costs thereof, and the landlord or his duly authorised agent shall not, within *two months* after such notice, deliver to the tenant an assent in writing to such intended improvement or improvements, the tenant may require the matter in difference to be referred to the Land Court. If the Land Court shall be of opinion that the improvement or improvements specified in the notice will increase the productiveness of the holding, or will enhance the value thereof, or be a suitable and a desirable imprevement to the holding as an agricultural holding, the Land Court may award leave to the tenant to execute such improvement or improvements without conditions, or subject to such conditions as they may set forth in the award, and thereupon the tenant on quitting shall be entitled to compensation for the improvements which he shall, within *five years* after the date of the award, execute in pursuance of such leave in the same manner as if the landlord had duly consented to the making of such improvement or improvements.

Amendment of schedule.

11. Part I. of the First Schedule to the Agricultural Holdings (England) Act, 1883, shall be read and have effect as if the following were added:

" (14*a*.) Any other improvement increasing the value " of or improving the holding and not specifically " mentioned in any part of this schedule."

Valuation of compensation.

12. Where any improvements are valued under the Agricultural Holdings (England) Act, 1883, with a view to compensation to be paid to a tenant, such valuation shall be made, unless the landlord and the tenant agree, by the Land Court.

Power of Tenant to nominate Successor or bequeath Tenancy.

Tenant may nominate his successor to tenancy.

13. A tenant may nominate his successor to the tenancy,—

(1.) Notice of the intended successor, giving name, address, and present occupation of such party and intended date of transfer must be given to the landlord not less than *six months* prior to the intended date of transfer.

(2.) The landlord shall have the right within *one month* from receipt of such notice to object to the proposed successor, and may himself re-enter into possession of the tenancy of the holding upon paying to the tenant such sum as may have been agreed to be paid by the person nominated to succeed to the tenancy.

(3.) In case the landlord shall doubt the *bona fides* of the agreement as to the amount to be paid to the outgoing tenant by his successor, he may, by giving notice to the present tenant within not less than *three months* from the proposed date of transfer, apply to the Land Court to decide whether the sum agreed upon between the tenant and his nominee is a fair and reasonable sum or not, and the Land Court shall have power to vary the amount to be paid.

(4.) The landlord may apply to the Land Court to determine whether the nominee of the tenant is a suitable person to enter upon the holding, due regard being had to his possession of the requisite capital for the proper working of the land, and as to his character and abilities for such occupation, and the Land Court shall have power to set aside such nomination.

Power for tenant to bequeath tenancy by will, and for the administrator of a deceased tenant to assign to next-of-kin without landlord's consent.

14. A tenant may bequeath his tenancy by will, and in case of intestacy the tenancy shall devolve as personalty upon the person or persons entitled under the statutes for the distribution of the personal estate and effects of intestates to the personal estate and effects of the deceased tenant.

Leaseholders.

Lessees and sub-lessees in occupation to be deemed tenants from year to year at expiration of leases.

15. At the expiration of leases of holdings existing at the date of the *passing of this Act*, and which were originally granted or held for lives or a life, or for lives or a life and years, or for a term of *five years* or upwards, the lessees or sub-lessees who shall be bonâ fide in occupation of their holdings shall be deemed to be tenants from year to year of the holdings at the rents and subject tothe conditions of their leases or sub-leases respectively so far as such conditions may be applicable to tenancies from year to year.

Regulations as to Common Grazings, Sheep-walks, and Mountain Pastures.

Appointment of committee.

16. The tenants in any parish or parishes who share in the same common grazing, sheep-walk, or mountain pasture, may, at a public meeting called by public notice, appoint a committee of such number as the meeting shall think fit, not being less than three or more than five, who shall be charged with the duty of making regulations as to the number of stock which each tenant shall be entitled to put on the common grazing, sheep-walk, or mountain pasture, and as to any other matters affecting the fair exercise of their joint rights therein by the several tenants.

The notice of meeting may be given by any two tenants interested in the common grazing or other right, and the notice shall be given by being published for two successive weeks in any newspaper circulating in the parish, or by being posted for two successive weeks at or near the door of every place of worship and every public school in the district affected.

In the event of any dispute arising as to the sufficiency of any such notice, such dispute shall be decided summarily by the Land Court, and their decision shall be final.

The regulations so made shall be submitted to the Land Court, who shall cause reasonable notice to be given to the landlord of the said common grazing, sheep-walk, or mountain pasture; and shall hear the parties, if this be desired by any party, and make such inquiry as they may deem necessary; and they shall, in considering the said regulations, have regard to any existing custom of the district in the matters affected, whether founded on estate rules or otherwise; and they may approve of the proposed regulations with or without alteration, or they may refuse to approve of the same; and, when so approved, such regulations shall come into force and may be added to or altered by the committee from time to time with the like approval.

Casual vacancies.

17. Such committee shall remain in office for *three years*, and at the end of every such period a new committee shall be appointed at a public meeting, and after public notice as aforesaid. Outgoing members shall be eligible for re-election. Vacancies occurring by death or resignation shall be filled up by nomination of the remaining members. A majority shall be a quorum. The said committee shall appoint one of their number to act as clerk or constable.

On failure of tenants to appoint committee, Land Commission may do so.

18. In case the tenants interested in any common grazing, sheep-walk, or mountain pasture shall at any time fail to appoint a committee, the Land Court may, on the request in writing of any two tenants interested, or the landlord or landlords, and after making such inquiry, if any, as the Court may deem necessary, appoint a committee, who shall have the same duties and powers, and remain in office for the same period, as if they had been appointed by the tenants, and in the event of such committee failing to make regulations within *three months* after their appointment, the Land Court may make such regulations themselves on the request in writing of any two tenants or of the landlord.

Land Court.

Appointment of Commissioner.

19. The Land Court under this Act shall be the county court of the district in which the holding is situated.

The county court judge of such court shall preside at all sittings of the court under this Act, and shall have sitting with him on all occasions (except where points of law only are to be decided) two assessors, who shall advise him on techical points.

Such assessors shall be practical farmers or land or estate agents, or such persons as shall have a thorough practical knowledge of farming as practised in the district.

Selection of assessors.

20. The selection of the two assessors to act in any case shall rest with the registrar of the county court, but it shall be his duty to provide that one of the two assessors shall be an estate or land agent, and the other a tenant farmer.

Appointment of assessors and valuers.

21. The county council for every county (other than the county council of a county borough) shall from time to time appoint a number of fit persons to be assessors for such county, and shall forward the names of such persons to the registrars of each of the county courts in such county, and the registrar of each court shall select assessors from the list for the county in which the holdings are situate, and the assessors shall receive such remuneration out of the county rate as may be sanctioned by the county council.

Forms of procedure.

22. The Land Court may, subject to the approval of the Board of Agriculture, frame and issue such printed forms of application and other forms of procedure as they shall think proper.

It shall be in the power of the Land Court to make rules with reference to proceedings before the Court, and also, with the approval of the Treasury, to fix a scale of costs and fees to be charged in carrying the Act into execution, and the taxation of such costs and fees, and the persons by whom, and the manner in which, such costs and fees are to be paid.

Procedure in fixing fair rent and reasonable conditions of tenancy.

23. When an application is made to the Land Court to fix a fair rent and reasonable conditions of tenancy intimation thereof shall be given to the other party interested in the holding, landlord or tenant, as the case may be, and the Land Court shall appoint a time and place at which parties shall be heard in reference to the matter of the application.

It shall be competent for the assessors, by order of the court, in case of such application, to visit the holding.

Power of Land Commission to take evidence and make order as to expenses.

24. In any application under this Act, it shall be competent to any of the parties thereto to demand, and for the Land Court to order, that the evidence shall be taken upon oath, and it shall also be competent to the Land Court to make such order as to expenses as they think fit.

Decision of Commissioners final.

25. The decision of the Land Court in regard to any of the matters committed to their determination by this Act shall be final.

Land Commission to settle disputes except as otherwise provided.

26. The Land Court shall have exclusive jurisdiction in respect of any matter or dispute arising under this Act, the mode of settlement of which is not otherwise provided for by this Act.

Power for Land Commission to use county court houses and employ officers of county courts.

27. The Land Court may use, free of charge, for holding its sittings, the court houses commonly used for county court purposes or for the holding of courts of petty sessions, and the officers of the county courts shall be bound to attend the sittings of the Land Court, and to perform analogous duties to those which they perform in the case of a sitting of a county court.

Commission to make report of their proceedings.

28. The Land Court shall once in every year make a report to the Board of Agriculture as to their proceedings under this Act, and every such report shall be presented to Parliament.

Record of proceedings; transmission of applications by sheriff clerk; sheriff clerk's remuneration.

29. There shall be kept in the clerk of the peace's office of the county to which this Act applies, a book to be called the "Tenant Holdings Book." In this book the clerk of the peace shall record every order of the Land Court with the application on which it proceeds, and any other proceeding in the case which the Court may think necessary to be recorded. It shall be the duty of the Land Court to send such orders and applications to the clerk of the peace to be recorded.

Sole referee may be chosen.

30. Where, in any preceeding under this Act, the Land Court is empowered to pronounce an order, the landlord and the crofter may agree to accept the decision of a sole referee mutually chosen instead of the decision of the Land Court, and in that case any order pronounced by such sole referee shall, when recorded in the "Tenant Holdings Book" along with the agreement to accept his decision, be as effectual to all intents and purposes as an order of the Land Court; and all regulations applicable to the Land Court, and to the orders pronounced by them, shall apply to sole referee and the orders pronounced by him.

Avoidance of contracts inconsistent with the Act.

31. Every contract, agreement, covenant, condition, or arrangement which purport to take away or modify the rights of the tenant as declared, given, and reserved to him by this Act, or which gives to such tenant any advantage in consideration of his forbearing to exercise such rights (otherwise than is permitted or provided for by this Act), or imposes upon him any disadvantage in consequence of his exercising such rights, shall be void both at law and in equity so far as it takes away or modifies his rights or gives him any advantage or disadvantage as aforesaid.

Tenancies to which the Act does not apply.

32. This Act shall not apply to tenancies in—

(1.) Any holding which is not agricultural or pastoral in its character, or partly agricultural and partly pastoral, or cultivated in whole or in part as a market garden; or

(2.) Any demesne land, or any land being or forming part of a home farm; or

(3.) Any holding which the tenant holds by reason of his being a hired labourer or hired servant; or

(4.) Any letting for the purposes of temporary depasturage; or

(5.) Any holding let to the tenant during his continuance in any office, appointment, or employment, or for the temporary convenience, or to meet a temporary necessity, either of the landlord or tenant: Provided that any such letting made after the *passing of this Act* shall be by contract in writing, which shall express the purpose for which such letting is made, but such contract shall not be registered.

Interpretation of terms.

33. In the construction of this Act the following words and expressions shall have the meaning hereby assigned to them, unless there be something in the context repugnant thereto:

"Contract of tenancy" means a letting of, or agreement for the letting of, land from year to year, or for a term not exceeding *five years*.

"Agent" includes a person authorised to receive rent.

"Tenant" means a person occupying a holding under a contract of tenancy.

"Holding" includes all land, agricultural or pastoral, or partly agricultural and partly pastoral, or cultivated in whole or part as a market garden, held by the same tenant of the same landlord for the same term under the same contract of tenancy.

"Ejectment" includes every proceeding for the recovery of a holding or any part thereof.

"Conditions of tenancy" shall mean agricultural conditions or restrictions for the purpose of securing the proper cultivation of the holding and maintaining or increasing the productiveness of the soil thereof.

XXVII.

(Handed in by Mr. T. Carrington-Smith. See Questions 9667 and 9771.)

Since the completion of his examination the witness has made application to the clerk of the council for the county of Stafford for an official return of the basis of county rate as settled by the County Rate Assessment Committee respectively in 1876, 1883, and 1893.

The appended extract is a fair representation of those parishes—which the whole area of the county being considered—are specially typical of its agriculture. Whilst the witness desires to draw the attention of the

Appendix A., XXVII. and XXVIII.

Royal Commission to the corroboration furnished by the "extract" to the answer given to Question 9771, viz., that rents have not been reduced in Staffordshire more than 10 per cent., he begs that the information conveyed in the answer given to Question 9667 may be taken in conjunction with that given by the County Rate Assessments.

Union.	Parish.	Dates of Assessment to County Rate, Stafford.		
		1876.	1883.	1891 and 1893.
Ashbourne - -	Alstonefield -	4,632	4,900	4,332
Burton-on-Trent -	Rolleston - -	5,744	6,820	6,572
" -	Wichnor - -	4,250	4,945	4,648
Cannock - -	Brewood - -	30,036	26,473	23,422
" - -	Penkridge -	26,150	24,000	22,254
Cheadle - -	Checkley - -	14,555	14,282	13,473
" - -	Ipstones - -	10,074	8,734	9,348
Leek - -	Warslow - -	3,825	3,997	3,651
Lichfield - -	Hamstall Ridware	4,660	3,986	3,455
Newcastle - -	Audley - -	39,617	41,294	48,198
Newport - -	Adbaston - -	6,750	6,475	6,571
Seisdon - -	Trysull & Seisdon	5,961	6,000	4,655
" - -	Enville - -	8,000	7,340	5,858
Shifnall - -	Blymhill - -	4,637	4,608	3,901
Stafford - -	Hopton and Coton	6,980	6,278	6,028
Stone - -	Swynnerton -	10,915	11,263	10,462
Tamworth - -	Clifton Campville	5,953	5,758	4,733
Uttoxeter	Abbots Bromley -	12,307	12,053	11,265
" -	Kingstone -	2,870	2,787	2,536
		207,316	201,993	195,362*

* A fall of 3⅓ per cent. from 1883, a fall of 6¾ from 1876.

APPENDIX XXVIII.

The following letter was received from Messrs. Boydell, Taylor, and Huitt relative to the evidence given by Mr. Thomas Parker.

2, Pepper Street, Chester,
May 29, 1894.

Dear Sir,

Mr. Barnston's attention having been called to the evidence given before the Royal Commission on Agriculture by Mr. Thomas Parker, of Churton Hall, Chester, who was until lately a tenant of Mr. Barnston's, and to the fact that in this evidence Mr. Parker referred to some extent to the dispute existing between himself and his landlord, we think it right to submit the enclosed observations on Mr. Parker's evidence so far as it appears to us to affect Mr. Barnston, and we shall be obliged if you will lay the same before the Commissioners.

Yours truly,
Boydell, Taylor, and Huitt.

H. Lyon, Esq.,
Royal Commission on
Agriculture.

Observations on Mr. Thomas Parker's Evidence.

Question 10,743–50.—In the year 1884 *all* tenants on the estate were served with notice to quit, but, with the exception of a Mr. George Parker (a brother of Mr. Thomas Parker), they were all told that they would be allowed to remain on signing fresh agreements.

The agent, a Mr. Wilmot, was directed to make a valuation of all the farms, and this he did, and with three exceptions it was found that the tenants had previously paid what he considered was the value. In two of these cases the amount was so small that no alteration was made, and they were allowed to remain on at the same rent. The other exception was Mr. Thomas Parker, and in this case the difference was so great that the trustees were bound to increase his rent or else reduce the rent of the other tenants, especially as the agent, in his report, stated that he had heard that there was much dissatisfaction on account of the farm being underlet.

This course was adopted by the trustees under the advice of their solicitors to bring the tenants within the provisions of the Agricultural Holdings Act passed the previous session, and to prevent any claims being made for improvements before the Act.

Question 10,494.—This clause was inserted in Mr. Parker's agreement to meet his claim for unexhausted improvements. The trustees were, of course, unable to recognise his claim for improvements effected by his father, and in agreeing to its insertion they were under the impression that they were fairly meeting his claim, as for seven years he would hold the farm at a considerable less rental than it was admitted to be worth.

Question 10,690.—This is not correct; in October 1892 Mr. Parker requested Mr. Barnston not to insist upon the payment of the rent, he and the present agent of the estate were both under the impression he was liable to pay under his agreement, viz., 570*l.*, and at the same time stated that if he did he would have to leave the farm. Mr. Barnston, having consulted with his agent, saw no reason to alter the terms of what both parties thought was the agreement, especially as if he did he was advised that the other tenants would probably also ask for a reduction, he, therefore, told Mr. Parker that he could not do so. Mr. Parker then told him he would have to go, and would look out for another farm. Shortly after Christmas Mr. Parker asked Mr. Barnston to reconsider his determination, but this he declined to do. Mr. Barnston then, after consultation with his agent, decided to serve Mr. Parker with notice, as he objected to have one of his tenants holding threats over his head, but at the same time gave instructions that the farm was not to be relet, as he hoped that Mr. Parker would, on consideration, express himself willing to carry out his agreement, but in this hope he was disappointed, as, although Mr. Parker was told by the agent, if he liked he could apply for the farm, he never did so until after four months, and the farm was then on offer to Mr. Bellis, the present tenant.

Appendix B.

APPENDIX B.

SCHEDULE I.

TABLE showing for the UNITED KINGDOM the ACREAGE under WHEAT, and the ESTIMATED NET PRODUCTION and the ESTIMATED VALUE of the CROP, excluding STRAW, in each HARVEST YEAR from 1869–70 to 1892–3.

1. Harvest Years. Sept. 1 to Aug. 31.	2. Acres of Wheat under Cultivation.	3. Estimated Yield of Wheat per Acre.	4. Average Price of Wheat per Imperial Quarter.	5. Estimated Total Production of Wheat (less Seed) in Quarters.	6. Value of Crop.
	Acres.	Qrs.	*s.* *d.*	Qrs.	£
1869–70 - - - - - -	3,982,000	3·44	46 2	12,583,000	29,046,000
1870–71 - - - - -	3,774,000	3·81	54 2	13,322,000	36,080,000
1871–72 - - - - - -	3,831,000	3·05	56 7	10,612,000	30,023,000
1872–73 - - - - - -	3,839,000	3·05	57 3	10,634,000	30,440,000
1873–74 - - - - -	3,670,000	2·86	61 3	9,469,000	28,999,000
1874–75 - - - - - -	3,831,000	3·72	44 7	13,179,000	29,378,000
Average of six years - -	3,821,000	3·32	53 4	11,633,000	31,021,000
1875–76 - - - - -	3,514,000	2·91	45 11	9,242,000	21,218,000
1876–77 - - - - - -	3,125,000	3·17	54 7	9,031,000	24,647,000
1877–78 - - - - - -	3,321,000	3·37	50 10	10,262,000	26,082,000
1878–79 - - - -	3,382,000	3·81	41 6	11,938,000	24,771,000
1879–80 - - - - - -	3,056,000	1·97	46 0	5,165,000	11,879,000
1880–81 - - - - - -	3,066,000	3·11	43 10	8,677,000	19,017,000
Average of six years - -	3,244,000	3·06	47 1	9,052,000	21,310,000
1881–82 - - - - - -	2,967,000	3·05	47 1	8,219,000	19,349,000
1882–83 - - - - -	3,164,000	3·25	41 10	9,397,000	19,655,000
1883–84 - - - - - -	2,713,000	3·56	38 5	8,899,000	17,093,000
1884–85 - - - - - -	2,751,000	3·74	33 2	9,518,000	15,784,000
1885–86 - - - - -	2,553,000	3·90	30 10	9,242,000	14,248,000
1886–87 - - - - - -	2,358,000	3·36	33 0	7,263,000	11,984,000
Average of six years - -	2,751,000	3·48	37 4	8,756,000	16,344,000
1887–88 - - - - -	2,887,000	4·00	30 11	8,951,000	13,837,000
1888–89 - - - - - -	2,668,000	3·50	30 8	8,671,000	13,296,000
1889–90 - - - - - -	2,544,000	3·74	31 2	8,879,000	13,836,000
1890–91 - - - - -	2,484,000	3·83	35 4	8,893,000	15,711,000
1891–92 - - - - - -	2,392,000	3·91	33 5	8,755,000	14,628,000
1892–93 - - - - - -	2,299,000	3·31	26 8	7,035,000	9,380,000
Average of six years - -	2,462,000	3·71	31 4	8,531,000	13,365,000
1893–94 - - - - -	1,955,000	3·26	26 0	5,885,000	7,650,500

NOTE.—In the above Schedule the figures shown in column 2 have been extracted from the Annual Agricultural Returns; the yield per acre (col. 3) from 1869–70 to 1883–4 has been taken from the statement issued by Messrs. Lawes and Gilbert (Journal of Royal Agricultural Society, Vol. IV., Part I., 1893), and for subsequent years from the Produce Statistics published by the Board of Agriculture. The average price of wheat (col. 4) has been calculated from the official prices of British corn, ascertained under the Corn Returns Act, 1882, and earlier statutes. In calculating the production of wheat (col. 5) 2¼ bushels per acre has been deducted for seed from 1869–70 to 1886–87, and for subsequent years 2 bushels per acre has been deducted for seed, in accordance with the practice adopted by Messrs. Lawes and Gilbert.

The figures in column 6 have been obtained by multiplying the figures in col. 5 by those in col. 4.

The price quoted for 1893–4 is the average price for the first eight months of the harvest year 1893–4.

SCHEDULE II.

TABLE showing for the UNITED KINGDOM the ESTIMATED NET PRODUCTION and the NET IMPORTATION of WHEAT in each HARVEST YEAR 1869–70 to 1892–3.

1. Harvest Years Sept. 1 to Aug. 31.	2. Estimated Total Production of Wheat (less Seed) in Quarters.	3. Imports less Exports in Quarters.	4. Total of 2 and 3.	5. Estimated Population at middle of Harvest Year.
	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	No.
1869–70	12,583,000	10,206,000	22,789,000	31,164,000
1870–71	13,322,000	8,278,000	21,600,000	31,456,000
1871–72	10,612,000	9,641,000	20,253,000	31,768,000
1872–73	10,634,000	12,793,000	23,427,000	32,076,000
1873–74	9,469,000	11,627,000	21,096,000	32,393,000
1874–75	13,179,000	12,033,000	25,212,000	32,726,000
Average of six years	11,633,000	10,763,000	22,396,000	31,930,000
1875–76	9,242,000	14,224,000	23,466,000	33,080,000
1876–77	9,031,000	12,474,000	21,505,000	33,451,000
1877–78	10,262,000	14,849,000	25,111,000	33,821,000
1878–79	11,938,000	14,620,000	26,558,000	34,183,000
1879–80	5,165,000	16,953,000	22,118,000	34,516,000
1880–81	8,677,000	16,683,000	25,360,000	34,831,000
Average of six years	9,052,000	14,967,000	24,019,000	33,980,000
1881–82	8,210,000	17,654,000	25,873,000	35,117,000
1882–83	9,397,000	20,740,000	30,137,000	35,369,000
1883–84	8,899,000	16,477,000	25,376,000	35,633,000
1884–85	9,518,000	18,749,000	28,267,000	35,919,000
1885–86	9,242,900	15,799,000	25,041,000	36,217,000
1886–87	7,263,000	18,125,000	25,388,000	36,507,000
Average of six years	8,756,000	17,924,000	26,680,000	35,794,000
1887–88	8,951,000	17,490,000	26,441,000	36,790,000
1888–89	8,671,000	18,700,000	27,371,000	37,088,000
1889–90	8,879,000	18,891,000	27,770,000	37,387,000
1890–91	8,893,000	18,768,000	27,661,000	37,693,000
1891–92	8,755,000	22,873,000	31,628,000	38,005,000
1892–93	7,035,000	22,011,000	29,046,000	38,644,000
Average of six years	8,531,000	19,789,000	28,320,000	37,600,000
1893–94	5,885,000	—	—	—

The figures in column 2 are based on the figures shown in columns 2 and 3 of Schedule I. In calculating the production of wheat (col. 2) 2¼ bushels per acre has been deducted for seed from 1869–70 to 1886–87, and for subsequent years 2 bushels per acre has been deducted for seed in accordance with the practice adopted by Messrs. Lawes and Gilbert.

The figures in column 3 have been taken from Messrs. Lawes and Gilbert's statement for the years 1869–70 to 1887–88 inclusive, and they have also been compared with the Trade and Navigation Returns. For subsequent years the imports less exports have been obtained solely from the Trade and Navigation Returns.

The estimated population has been taken from the statement issued by Messrs. Lawes and Gilbert and compared with the Returns issued by the Registrar-General.

SCHEDULE III.

Appendix B.

Table showing the **Estimated Average Yield** per **Acre** of **Wheat**, and the **Estimated Value** of the **Crop** per **Acre**, excluding **Straw**, in **Great Britain** for each Year since 1857.

Harvest Years.	Estimated Production of Wheat per Acre in Bushels.	Production of Wheat per Acre as compared with Standard of 100. (100 = 28 bush.)	Average Price per Imperial Quarter.	Estimated Value of Crop per Acre in Money.
			s. d.	£ s. d.
1857–8 - -	34·4	124	47 8	10 5 0
1858–9 -	32·8	116	43 9	8 19 4
1859–60 -	25·6	91	48 3	7 14 5
1860–1 - -	21·6	78	55 3	7 9 2
1861–2 -	25·6	91	58 1	9 5 10
1862–3 - -	30·4	108	47 7	9 0 10
Average of six years	28·4	102	50 1	8 17 10
1863–4 - -	39·2	140	40 11	10 0 6
1864–5 -	35·2	126	40 0	8 16 0
1865–6 - -	29·6	106	46 6	8 12 0
1866–7 -	25·6	91	60 4	9 13 1
1867–8 - -	20·8	74	68 4	8 17 8
1868–9 -	34·4	126	49 11	10 14 8
Average of six years	30·8	110	51 0	9 16 4
1869–70 -	28·8	102	46 2	8 6 2
1870–1 - -	31·2	112	54 2	10 11 3
1871–2 -	25·6	91	56 7	9 1 1
1872–3 - -	25·6	91	57 3	9 3 2
1873–4 -	22·4	80	61 3	8 11 6
1874–5 - -	29·6	106	44 7	8 4 11
Average of six years	27·2	97	53 4	9 1 4

Harvest Years.	Estimated Production of Wheat per Acre in Bushels.	Production of Wheat per Acre as compared with Standard of 100. (100 = 28 bush.)	Average Price per Imperial Quarter.	Estimated Value of Crop per Acre in Money.
			s. d.	£ s. d.
1875–6 - -	21·6	78	45 9	6 3 6
1876–7 -	21·6	76	54 7	7 7 4
1877–8 - -	20·8	74	50 10	6 12 2
1878–9 -	30·4	108	41 6	7 17 8
1879–80 -	16·0	58	46 0	4 12 0
1880–1 - -	25·6	91	43 10	7 0 3
Average of six years	22·6	81	47 1	6 13 0
1881–2 - -	24·4	87	47 1	7 3 7
1882–3 -	26·0	93	41 10	6 15 11
1883–4 - -	28·5	102	38 5	6 16 10
1884–5 -	30·0	107	33 2	6 4 4
1885–6 - -	31·3	112	30 10	6 0 7
1886–7 -	26·9	96	33 0	5 11 0
Average of six years	27·8	99	37 4	6 9 8
1887–8 - -	32·1	115	30 11	6 4 1
1888–9 -	28·0	100	30 8	5 7 4
1889–90 -	29·9	107	31 2	5 16 6
1890–1 - -	30·7	110	35 4	6 15 7
1891–2 -	31·3	112	33 5	6 10 9
1892–3 - -	26·4	94	26 8	4 8 0
Average of six years	29·7	106	31 4	5 16 4
1893–4 - -	25·9	93	26 0	4 4 3

Note.—In this Schedule the figures from 1857 to 1880 inclusive have been reproduced, with a few corrections, from the tables presented to the Duke of Richmond's Commission of 1880 by the Right Hon. G. J. Shaw Lefevre, M.P. For the three years 1881 to 1883 the yield of wheat per acre has been taken from the statement published by Messrs. Lawes and Gilbert, referred to under Schedule I., while for the years 1884 to 1892 the yield has been extracted from the Produce Statistics issued by the Board of Agriculture.

The average price of wheat per imperial quarter has been obtained from the sources indicated in the note to Schedule I.

The price quoted for 1893–4 is the average price of the first eight months of the harvest year 1893–4.

Appendix B.

SCHEDULE IV.

TABLE showing for GREAT BRITAIN the ACREAGE and the ESTIMATED PRODUCTION of BARLEY, and the ESTIMATED VALUE of the CROP, excluding STRAW, in each Year since 1869–70.

Harvest Years.	Acreage.	Estimated Yield per Acre in Quarters.	Estimated Gross Produce in Quarters.	Average Price per Imperial Quarter.		Estimated Value of Crop.
	Acres.	Quarters.	Quarters.	s.	d.	£
1869–70	2,251,000	4·4	9,904,000	42	0	17,298,000
1870–1	2,371,000	4·7	11,143,000	36	0	20,057,000
1871–2	2,385,000	3·9	9,302,000	36	0	16,744,000
1872–3	2,316,000	3·9	9,230,000	39	4	18,156,000
1873–4	2,335,000	3·4	6,937,000	43	3	15,724,000
1874–5	2,287,000	4·5	10,961,000	40	3	22,263,000
Average of six years	2,324,170	4·1	9,529,000	39	6	18,820,000
1875–6	2,509,000	3·5	8,781,500	34	4	15,074,908
1876–7	2,583,000	3·5	8,865,500	38	5	17,028,200
1877–8	2,417,000	3·3	7,976,000	41	1	16,384,033
1878–9	2,469,000	4·7	11,604,300	34	3	19,872,363
1879–80	2,667,000	2·8	7,467,000	34	11	13,037,285
1880–1	2,467,000	4·0	9,868,000	31	11	15,747,700
Average of six years	2,510,333	3·6	9,037,000	35	10	16,191,000
1881–2	2,442,000	4·00	9,768,000	31	0	15,140,000
1882–3	2,255,000	4·11	9,268,000	32	4	14,983,000
1883–4	2,292,000	4·42	10,131,000	31	1	15,745,000
1884–5	2,169,000	4·26	9,239,000	30	8	14,166,000
1885–6	2,257,000	4·39	9,906,000	27	7	13,662,000
1886–7	2,241,000	4·02	9,011,000	24	9	11,151,000
Average of six years	2,276,000	4·20	9,559,000	29	3	13,980,000
1887–8	2,085,000	3·91	8,163,000	28	0	11,428,000
1888–9	2,086,000	4·10	8,560,000	25	4	10,843,000
1889–90	2,122,000	3·97	8,428,000	28	11	12,185,000
1890–1	2,111,000	4·38	9,242,000	28	0	12,939,000
1891–2	2,113,000	4·27	9,016,000	27	2	12,246,000
1892–3	2,037,000	4·33	8,811,000	24	10	10,940,000
Average of six years	2,092,000	4·16	8,703,000	27	1	11,785,000
1893–4	2,075,000	3·59	7,442,000	28	4	10,543,000

NOTE.—In this Schedule the figures for the years 1869 to 1880 inclusive have been reproduced from the tables presented to the Duke of Richmond's Commission of 1880 by the Right Hon. G. J. Shaw Lefevre, M.P.

The statistics of acreage from 1881 to 1892 inclusive have been obtained from the Agricultural Returns. The yield per acre for 1881 and 1882 has been obtained from *The Farmer*, and that for 1883 has been taken from the *Mark Lane Express*.

For the years 1884 to 1892 inclusive the yield per acre has been obtained from the Produce Statistics issued by the Board of Agriculture.

The average price per quarter has been calculated from the official prices of British corn referred to in the note to Schedule I.

The price quoted for 1893–4 is the average price of the first eight months of the harvest year 1893–4.

SCHEDULE V.

TABLE showing for GREAT BRITAIN the ACREAGE and ESTIMATED PRODUCTION of OATS, and the ESTIMATED VALUE of the CROP, excluding STRAW, in each Year since 1869–70.

Harvest Years.	Acreage.	Estimated Yield per Acre in Quarters.	Estimated Gross Produce in Quarters.	Average Price per Imperial Quarter.	Estimated Value of Crop.
	Acres.	Quarters.	Quarters.	s. d.	£
1869–70 - - - - - -	2,782,000	6·2	17,248,000	23 2	19,835,000
1870–1 - - - - - -	2,763,000	6·7	18,512,000	25 0	23,135,000
1871–2 - - - - -	2,715,000	5·6	15,204,000	23 5	17,864,000
1872–3 - - - - - -	2,705,000	5·6	15,144,000	24 4	18,424,000
1873–4 - - - -	2,676,000	4·8	12,816,000	28 2	18,049,000
1874–5 - - -	2,596,000	6·4	16,614,000	29 6	24,510,000
Average of six years - -	2,706,166	5·9	15,966,000	25 7	20,428,000
1875–6 - - - - - -	2,664,000	4·9	13,053,600	26 4	17,187,240
1876–7 - - - - -	2,798,000	4·9	13,710,200	26 2	17,937,511
1877–8 - - - -	2,754,000	4·8	13,219,200	25 2	16,634,110
1878–9 - - - - - -	2,698,000	6·9	18,616,200	21 8	20,167,550
1879–80 - - - -	2,656,000	3·8	10,092,800	23 6	11,859,040
1880–1 - - - -	2,796,000	5·9	16,496,400	21 10	18,008,570
Average of six years - -	2,722,700	5·2	14,158,000	24 5	17,284,000
1881–2 - - - - - -	2,901,000	4·75	13,780,000	21 11	15,106,000
1882–3 - - - - - -	2,834,000	5·17	14,652,000	21 8	15,873,000
1883–4 - - - - - -	2,975,000	5·45	16,214,000	20 4	16,484,000
1884–5 - - - - -	2,915,000	4·69	13,675,000	20 9	14,188,000
1885–6 - - - - - ·	2,940,000	4·61	13,545,000	19 5	13,140,000
1886–7 - - - -	3,081,000	4·73	14,575,000	16 11	12,328,000
Average of six years - -	2,941,000	4·90	14,411,000	20 2	14,531,000
1887–8 - - - - - -	3,088,000	4·34	13,410,000	16 3	10,946,000
1888–9 - - - - -	2,882,000	4·66	13,418,000	17 6	11,741,000
1889–90 - - - - - -	2,889,000	4·87	14,180,000	18 6	13,166,000
1890–1 - - - - - -	2,903,000	5·17	15,023,000	19 1	14,344,000
1891–2 - - - - -	2,899,000	4·84	14,048,000	20 9	14,575,000
1892–3 - - - - - -	2,997,000	4·85	14,537,000	18 9	13,628,000
Average of six years - -	2,943,000	4·79	14,097,000	18 6	13,040,000
1893–4 - - - - -	3,172,000	4·45	14,111,000	18 0	12,700,000

NOTE.—In the above Schedule the figures from 1869 to 1880 inclusive have been reproduced from the tables presented to the Duke of Richmond's Commission of 1880 by the Right Hon. G. J. Shaw Lefevre, M.P.

The statistics of acreage from 1881 to 1892 inclusive have been taken from the Agricultural Returns.

The estimated yield per acre from 1881 to 1892 inclusive has been obtained from the sources indicated in the note to Schedule III.

The price of oats per imperial quarter has been computed from the statistics of prices of British corn referred to in the note to Schedule I.

The price quoted for 1893–4 is the average price of the first eight months of the harvest year 1893–4.

In considering this Schedule it should be noted that it has been estimated that 50 per cent. of the oats produced in England and Wales are consumed on the farms. It should also be observed that the acreage includes a large area under oats in Scotland, and that there are no official records of the prices of oats in that country.

Appendix B.

SCHEDULE VI.

TABLE showing the NUMBER of CATTLE and SHEEP in GREAT BRITAIN from the year 1870.

(Extracted from "The Agricultural Returns.")

Year.	Cattle.			Total of Cattle.	Sheep.		Total of Sheep.
	Cows and Heifers in Milk or Calf.	Two Years of Age and above.	Under two Years of Age.		One Year Old and above.	Under one Year Old.	
1870 - - -	2,161,804	1,355,993	1,885,520	5,403,317	18,410,250	9,987,339	28,397,589
1871 - - -	2,091,433	1,356,777	1,889,549	5,337,759	17,571,552	9,548,017	27,119,569
1872 - - -	2,165,127	1,421,900	2,037,967	5,624,994	17,960,967	9,960,440	27,921,507
1873 - - - -	2,237,514	1,419,789	2,307,246	5,964,549	18,777,756	10,649,879	29,427,635
1874 - - -	2,273,797	1,509,624	2,342,070	6,125,491	19,448,730	10,865,211	30,313,941
1875 - - - -	2,253,241	1,585,213	2,174,370	6,012,824	18,774,734	10,392,704	29,167,438
Average of six years.	2,197,153	1,441,549	2,106,120	5,744,822	18,490,665	10,233,948	28,724,613
1876 - - -	2,226,367	1,567,641	2,050,133	5,844,141	18,258,352	9,924,599	28,182,951
1877 - - - -	2,207,017	1,464,317	2,026,599	5,697,933	18,145,205	10,015,959	28,161,164
1878 - - -	2,208,297	1,476,625	2,053,206	5,738,128	18,055,141	10,351,065	28,406,206
1879 - - - -	2,255,236	1,404,752	2,196,368	5,856,356	18,172,209	9,984,871	28,157,080
1880 - - -	2,241,708	1,460,726	2,209,612	5,912,046	17,186,011	9,433,039	26,619,050
1881 - - - -	2,270,268	1,505,709	2,135,665	5,911,642	16,143,151	8,437,902	24,581,053
Average of six years.	2,234,815	1,479,962	2,111,930	5,826,707	17,660,011	9,691,239	27,351,250
1882 - - -	2,267,175	1,396,326	2,143,990	5,807,491	15,573,884	8,745,884	24,319,768
1883 - - - -	2,306,082	1,368,920	2,287,777	5,962,779	15,948,667	9,119,604	25,068,271
1884 - - -	2,390,863	1,386,833	2,491,945	6,269,141	16,384,863	9,683,491	26,068,354
1885 - - - -	2,530,197	1,465,505	2,602,262	6,597,964	16,537,607	9,997,028	26,534,635
1886 - - -	2,537,865	1,574,883	2,533,935	6,646,683	16,175,999	9,344,719	25,520,718
1887 - - - -	2,536,280	1,559,073	2,345,915	6,441,268	16,146,249	9,812,519	25,958,768
Average of six years.	2,428,077	1,458,507	2,400,970	6,287,554	16,127,878	9,450,541	25,578,419
1888 - - -	2,450,444	1,434,305	2,244,626	6,129,375	15,726,947	9,530,202	25,257,149
1889 - - - -	2,433,639	1,453,859	2,252,057	6,139,555	15,862,132	9,769,888	25,632,020
1890 - -	2,537,990	1,439,119	2,531,523	6,508,632	16,756,568	10,515,891	27,272,459
1891 - - - -	2,657,054	1,504,649	2,691,118	6,852,821	17,786,941	10,945,617	28,732,558
1892 - - -	2,650,891	1,666,706	2,627,186	6,944,783	17,957,049	10,777,655	28,734,704
1893 - - -	2,554,624	1,580,242	2,565,810	6,700,676	17,039,739	10,240,595	27,280,334
Average of six years.	2,547,440	1,513,147	2,485,886	6,545,973	16,854,896	10,296,641	27,151,537

Appendix B.

SCHEDULE VII.

AVERAGE WHOLESALE PRICES of LIVE MEAT per Stone of 8 lbs., sinking the Offal, at the METROPOLITAN CATTLE MARKET, in each Year from 1871 to 1891 inclusive, and AVERAGES of the PRICES of certain Series of Years.

(Extracted from "The Agricultural Returns.")

	BEEF.		MUTTON.	
Years.	Inferior Quality.	First Quality.	Inferior Quality.	First Quality.
	s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.
1871 -	3 10 to 4 9	4 11 to 5 10	4 8 to 5 2	5 4 to 6 6
1872 -	4 2 „ 4 9	5 3 „ 5 10	4 10 „ 5 4	5 10 „ 6 8
1873 -	5 1 „ 5 5	5 11 „ 6 4	5 8 „ 6 0	6 6 „ 6 11
1874 -	4 5 „ 5 3	5 9 „ 6 2	4 10 „ 5 3	5 7 „ 5 11

	BEEF.						MUTTON.					
	FOREIGN.			BRITISH.			FOREIGN.			BRITISH.		
Years.	Inferior.	Second.	First.	Inferior.	Second.	First.	Inferior.	Second.	First.	Inferior.	Second.	First.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
1875 -	3 10	5 0	5 9	3 10	5 7	6 2	4 5	5 5	6 1	5 2	6 5	6 11
1876 -	4 3	5 2	5 8	4 4	5 5	6 0	4 8	5 9	6 4	5 5	6 6	7 0
1877 -	4 4	5 2	5 8	4 6	5 6	5 11	—	—	—	5 6	6 6	6 11
1878 -	4 6	5 3	5 9	4 6	5 6	6 0	—	—	—	5 4	6 4	6 10
1879 -	4 1	4 8	5 2	4 1	4 11	5 6	4 6	5 2	5 8	5 5	6 1	6 7
1880 -	4 3	5 1	5 7	4 6	5 5	5 11	4 9	5 6	6 0	5 6	6 4	6 10
1881 -	4 0	4 7	5 0	4 5	5 1	5 6	4 11	5 6	6 0	5 8	6 4	6 9
1882 -	4 0	5 0	5 5	4 4	5 7	6 0	5 4	5 11	6 4	6 1	6 9	7 2
1883 -	4 3	5 1	5 6	4 4	5 7	6 1	5 6	6 0	6 5	6 2	6 9	7 3
1884 -	4 0	4 9	5 2	4 1	5 4	5 9	4 11	5 4	5 9	5 6	5 11	6 5
1885 -	3 10	4 4	4 10	3 11	4 9	5 3	4 1	4 7	5 0	4 6	5 2	5 8
1886 -	3 1	3 10	4 3	3 3	4 3	4 10	3 9	4 8	5 4	4 2	5 5	6 0
1887 -	2 11	3 4	3 10	3 0	3 8	4 5	3 3	4 0	4 5	3 7	4 8	5 3
1888 -	2 4	3 8	4 2	2 4	4 2	4 11	3 2	4 6	5 5	3 3	4 11	5 10
1889 -	2 4	3 10	4 3	2 4	4 5	4 10	3 9	5 4	5 11	3 6	5 7	6 4
1890 -	2 4	3 10	4 3	2 4	4 4	4 10	4 6	5 0	5 6	4 6	5 6	6 3
1891 -	3 0	3 10	4 5	2 9	4 4	4 11	3 5	4 3	5 1	3 9	5 3	5 10
1892 -	3 0	3 8	4 2	2 11	4 1	4 9	—	—	—	3 9	4 11	5 7
	AVERAGES.						AVERAGES.					
1866–70 -	3 6	—	—	—	—	5 4	3 6	—	—	—	—	5 8
1871–75 -	4 3	—	—	—	—	6 1	4 10	—	—	—	—	6 7
1876–80 -	4 3	5 1	5 7	4 5	5 4	5 10	*4 8	*5 6	*6 0	5 5	6 4	6 10
1881–85 -	4 0	4 9	5 2	4 3	5 3	5 9	4 11	5 6	5 11	5 7	6 2	6 8
1886–90 -	2 7	3 8	4 2	2 8	4 2	4 9	3 8	4 8	5 4	3 10	5 3	5 11
1891–92 -	3 0	3 9	4 3	2 10	4 2	4 10	†3 5	†4 3	†5 1	3 9	5 1	5 8

* Average of 1876, 1879, and 1880.

† Average of 1891.

Appendix C.

APPENDIX C.

STATEMENT showing the RATES of CUSTOMS DUTY which are at present leviable in the different EUROPEAN COUNTRIES and the UNITED STATES on IMPORTS of the various Descriptions of GRAIN and FLOUR other than RICE and RICE FLOUR.

Tariff Classification.	Tariff Rates of Duty.			English Equivalents.		
Russia:		Rbls.	cop.		*s.*	*d.*
Cereals of all kinds other than rice	Free.			Free.		
Flour of all kinds	Poud. gross	0	20	Cwt., gross	1	11¾
Sweden:		Kron.	öre.		*s.*	*d.*
Rye, wheat, barley, maize, pease, and beans	100 kilos.	1	25	Cwt.	0	8½
Oats and vetches	Free.			Free.		
Other kinds (not including malt)	100 kilos.	1	25	Cwt.	0	8½
Flour and groats of all kinds	"	2	50	"	1	5
Norway:						
In grain:		Kron.	öre.		*s.*	*d.*
Buckwheat	100 kilos.	0	22	Cwt.	0	1½
Barley	"	0	22	"	0	1½
Beans, pease, and lentils	"	0	36	"	0	2½
Oats	Free.			Free.		
Wheat	100 kilos.	0	22	Cwt.	0	1½
Maize	"	0	22	"	0	1½
Rye	"	0	22	"	0	1½
Rye imported at the ports of Hammerfest, Vardo, or Vadso	Free.			Free.		
Ground:						
Groats:						
Of buckwheat	100 kilos.	0	50	Cwt.	0	3½
Of barley (including pearl barley)	"	0	50	"	0	3½
Of oats	Free.			Free.		
Of wheat or millet, including semolina	Kilog.	0	13	Cwt.	7	4
Meal and Flour:						
Of buckwheat, beans, barley, pease, lentils, or rye	100 kilos.	0	50	"	0	3½
Of maize, including crushed or broken maize	"	0	50	"	0	3½
Of oats	Free.			Free.		
Of wheat	100 kilos.	1	25	Cwt.	0	8½
Rye meal or flour imported at the ports of Hammerfest, Vardo, or Vadso	Free.			Free.		
Bran	"			"		
Denmark:						
Cereals, corn, pulse, and flour, viz., buckwheat, barley, beans, oats, millet, wheat, lentils, maize, rye, vetches, or pease; all these ground or not	"			"		
Germany:		Mks.	pfg.		*s.*	*d.*
Bran	Free.			Free.		
Wheat	100 kilos.	3	50	Cwt.	1	9¼
Rye	"	3	50	"	1	9¼
Oats	"	2	80	"	1	5
Buckwheat	"	2	00	"	1	0¼
Pulse	"	1	50	"	0	9¼
Barley	"	2	00	"	1	0¼
Maize	"	1	60	"	0	9¾
Other descriptions of grains, not separately mentioned	"	1	00	"	0	6
Millers' products of grain and pulse, *i.e.*, hulled or pearled grain, pearl barley, groats, meal, and flour	"	7	30	"	3	8½
Holland:						
Corn, grain, meal, and flour of all kinds	Free.			Free.		
Belgium:						
Corn, grain, meal, and flour of all kinds	"			"		
France:						
In grain:		Frs.	cts.		*s.*	*d.*
Wheat, spelt, and meslin	100 kilos.	7	00	Cwt.	2	10¼
Oats	"	3	00	"	1	2¾
Barley	"	3	00	"	1	2¾
Rye	"	3	00	"	1	2¾
Maize	"	3	00	"	1	2¾
Buckwheat	"	2	50	"	1	0¼
Dari and millet	"	3	00	"	1	2¾
Wheat, spelt, and meslin, crushed or as grist, containing more than 10 per cent. of flour	"	11	00	"	4	5¾
Pearled or cleaned grain other than millet	"	16	00	"	6	6
Millet, hulled or cleaned	"	6	00	"	2	5¼
Groats, grits (coarse flour)	"	16	00	"	6	6

Appendix C.

Tariff Classification.	Tariff Rates of Duty.			English Equivalents.		
Meal and Flour :						
Of wheat, spelt, and meslin :						
At the rate of extraction (*taux d'extraction*) of 70 per cent. and above	100 kilos.	Frs. 11	Cts. 00	Cwt.	*s.* 4	*d.* 5¾
Ditto, ditto, between 60 and 70 per cent.	„	13	50	„	5	5¾
Ditto, ditto, of 60 per cent. or less	„	16	00	„	6	6
Of oats, barley, rye or maize	„	5	00	„	2	0½
Of buckwheat	„	4	00	„	1	7½
Of dari or millet	„	4	50	„	1	10
[*Note.*—All the foregoing descriptions of grain, flour, &c., of extra European origin, but imported from European entrepôts will pay the duties specified above with the addition of a surtax of 3 frs. 60 cts. per 100 kilos. (1*s.* 5½*d.* per cwt.)]						
Portugal :						
In Grain :			Reis.		*s.*	*d.*
Wheat	Prohibited, except under certain conditions and restrictions.					
Maize	Kilog.		18	Cwt.	4	1½
Other cereals in grain	„		16	„	3	8
Beans	„		15	„	3	5¼
Millet	„		35	„	8	0
Meal and flour :						
Of wheat	Prohibited, except under certain conditions and restrictions.					
Of other cereals	Kilog.		22	Cwt.	0	5¼
Spain :						
In grain :		Pes.	cts.		*s.*	*d.*
Wheat	100 kilogs.	8	00	Cwt.	3	3
Other cereals, except millet	„	4	40	„	1	9½
Millet	„	3	20	„	1	3½
Meal and flour :						
Of wheat	„	13	20	„	5	4½
Of other cereals, except millet	„	7	15	„	2	10¾
Of millet	„	4	80	„	1	11½
Pulse, imported from countries having commercial treaties with Spain	„	4	40	„	1	9½
„ imported from other countries	„	5	20	„	2	1¼
Italy :						
In grain :		Lire	cts.		*s.*	*d.*
Wheat	Ton	*70	00	Cwt.	2	10¼
Barley	„	11	50	„	0	5½
Oats	100 kilogs.	4	00	„	1	7½
Other kinds, including dried pulse	Ton	11	50	„	0	5½
Meal and flour :						
Of wheat	100 kilogs.	*11	50	„	4	8
Other kinds	„	2	80	„	1	1½
Semolina	„	*14	50	„	5	10¾
Bran	„	*3	25	„	1	3¾
Austria-Hungary :						
In grain :		Fl.	Kr.		*s.*	*d.*
Maize, millet, buckwheat	100 kilogs.	0	50	Cwt.	0	6
Barley, oats	„	0	75	„	0	9¼
Wheat, spelt, rye, meslin	„	1	50	„	1	6¼
Pulse : beans, lupines, pease, lentils, vetches	„	1	00	„	1	0¼
Meal and flour and mill products (crushed, bruised, and cleaned grain, pearl barley, groats, semolina made from cereals or pulse)	„	3	75	„	3	9¾
Switzerland :		Frs.	cts.		*s.*	*d.*
Bran	Free.			Free.		
Cereals, maize, and pulse :						
Not pearled nor hulled	100 kilogs.	0	30	Cwt.	0	1½
Pearled, hulled, cleaned, crushed, &c. ; also groats and semolina ; all these imported in casks or sacks	„	2	00	„	0	9¾
Meal and flour of cereals, maize, and pulse (not including rice flour)	„	2	00	„	0	9¾
Greece :		Drs.	lep.		*s.*	*d*
Wheat and meslin in grain	100 okes	4	11	Cwt.	1	3¾
Other cereals, in grain	„	3	02	„	0	11½
Pearl barley	„	20	00	„	6	5
Barley, roasted	Free.			Free.		
Meal and flour :						
Of wheat, bolted or not	100 okes	6	50	Cwt.	2	1
Of other cereals	„	4	77	„	1	6¼
Pulse	„	12	00	„	3	10
Bran	„	3	00	„	0	11½
Turkey :						
Corn, grain, pulse, meal, and flour of all kinds	8 per cent. *ad valorem.*			8 per cent. *ad valorem.*		
Bulgaria :						
Corn, grain, pulse, meal, and flour of all kinds	8½ per cent. *ad valorem.*			8½ per cent. *ad valorem.*		

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* These duties are provisionally in force in virtue of a Royal Decree dated 21st February 1894 ; the sanction of Parliament has yet to be given before they can be definitely applied.

Appendix C.

Tariff Classification.	Tariff Rates of Duty.			English Equivalents.		
Roumania:						
In grain:		Lei.	b.		*s.*	*d.*
Wheat, rye, maize, spelt, barley, oats, millet, buckwheat	Free.			Free.		
Wheat, meal, and flour of all qualities	100 kilogs.	12	00	Cwt.	4	10½
Meal and flour from all other cereals	„	5	00	„	2	0⅜
Bran	„	1	00	„	0	4⅞
Pulse (beans, pease, lentils, &c.), and flour therefrom	„	4	00	„	1	7½
United States:		Dols.	cts.		*s.*	*d.*
Barley	Bushel of 48 lbs.	0	30	Bushel of 48 lbs.	1	3
Pearl barley, patent or hulled barley	Lb.	0	02	Cwt.	9	4
Buckwheat	Bushel of 48 lbs.	0	15	Bushel of 48 lbs.	0	7½
Corn or maize	„ 56 lbs.	0	15	„ 56 lbs.	0	7½
Oats	Bushel	0	15	Bushel	0	7½
Rye	„	0	10	„	0	5
Wheat	„	0	25	„	1	0½
Beans	Bushel of 60 lbs.	0	40	Bushel of 60 lbs.	1	8
Pease, green, in bulk or in barrels, sacks, or similar packages	„ „	0	40	„ „	1	8
„ dried	Bushel	0	20	Bushel	0	10
„ split	Bushel of 60 lbs.	0	50	Bushel of 60 lbs.	2	1
„ in cartons, papers, or other small packages	Lb.	0	01	Cwt.	4	8
Corn (maize) meal	Bushel of 48 lbs.	0	20	Bushel of 48 lbs.	0	10
Oatmeal	Lb.	0	01	Cwt.	4	8
Rye flour	„	0	00½	„	2	4
Wheat flour	25 per cent *ad valorem.*			25 per cent. *ad valorem.*		

APPENDIX D.

Appendix D.

SUMMARY OF REPLIES received from the LAND OFFICE INSPECTORS of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE as to the extent of AGRICULTURAL DEPRESSION in their respective DISTRICTS.

County.	Heads of Inquiry.			Inspector's Name.
	Does Agricultural Depression exist?	Is it long standing or recent? Is it increasing or decreasing?	Has any land gone out of Cultivation?	
ENGLAND.				
BEDFORD	Depression exists most seriously	Depression is of long standing and increasing.	A large extent of heavy land has gone out of cultivation.	Mr. W. H. Haughton.
BERKS	Depression exists largely	Depression is of long standing and more acute on poorer land.	A considerable area is out of cultivation, particularly on the Berkshire Downs.	Mr. A. Castle.
BUCKINGHAM	Same as Berks	Ditto		Mr. A. Castle.
CAMBRIDGE	Depression exists	Depression is of long standing, and increasing.	A good deal of land is out of cultivation.	Mr. J. Bird.
ISLE OF ELY	Depression exists to a considerable extent; stronger lands and inferior fen lands have suffered most; the better and medium lands least.	Depression is increasing, and has been accentuated by bad corn crops of 1892-93. No part of England so dependent on corn as the Isle of Ely.	Is not aware of any land out of cultivation, but the standard of farming is lowered generally.	Mr. W. C. Little.
CHESTER	Depression exists	Depression is decreasing	No land out of cultivation; farms not difficult to let.	Mr. A. Wyatt.
CORNWALL	Depression exists	Depression commenced about 1877-78, and is not decreasing.	Is not aware of any land out of cultivation. It is a question of rent.	Mr. Jas. W. Dymond.
CUMBERLAND	Depression exists to some extent.	Depression is decreasing, owing to favourable effects of last season.	All land is occupied, but less land is ploughed.	Mr. J. M. Richardson.
DERBY	Depression exists to considerable extent, but as it is a dairy-farming district, it has not suffered so much as wheat districts.	Depression has existed to a certain extent for several years, but more severely felt this year on some farms on account of drought.	A large portion of arable land has been laid to permanent pasture, and agricultural labourers consequently out of employment.	Mr. G. M. Dixon.
DEVON	Depression exists generally throughout the county.	Depression began about 1877-78, and has continued and increased since.	Is not aware of land having gone out of cultivation.	Mr. F. W. Dymond.
DORSET	Considerable depression exists	Depression began about 1876, and has increased.	Not much land out of cultivation in Dorset.	Mr. C. Paterson.
DURHAM	Depression does not exist to any extent.		All land is under cultivation, and no lack of applicants for farms. Could not recommend local inquiry.	Mr. H. Wallace.
ESSEX	Depression exists	Depression is of long standing, and is increasing.	Is not aware of more than 100 acres actually out of cultivation. But a great many farms are unlet and in owners' hands.	Mr. R. Creed.
„	Depression exists considerably		Land has gone out of cultivation.	Mr. G. H. Taylor.
GLOUCESTER	"Vale of Gloster." Depression exists to a limited extent (chiefly grass and dairy farms). Depression more severe east of Cotswold.	Depression began 1878-80, and has since continued with fluctuations owing to low prices.	No land has gone out of cultivation, but land has been laid down to grass.	Mr. J. J. Harle.
HAMPSHIRE	Considerable depression exists	Depression has existed for 12 years.	Land has gone out of cultivation in light land districts.	Mr. G. H. Taylor.
HEREFORD	Depression exists to a serious extent.	Depression has existed since 1879.	On poorer land, especially clay loams or "wheatland," large areas have gone out of cultivation, and produce little but weeds.	Mr. H. J. Wyley.
HERTFORD	Depression exists	Depression is of long standing, and increasing.	Some clay land is out of cultivation.	Mr. J. Bird.
HUNTINGDON	Depression exists	Depression is of long standing, and increasing.	Some land has gone out of cultivation, and a large portion is greatly deteriorated.	Mr. J. Bird.
KENT	Depression exists	Depression has existed since 1878, and is increasing.	No land out of cultivation, but land has been allowed to fall down to grass.	Mr. F. Reid.
LANCASTER	Depression exists to a considerable extent.	Depression has existed for 10 years, last year being the worst.	No land has gone out of cultivation.	Mr. J. Cranston.
LEICESTER	Depression exists to a great extent, but the mixed farms in the county have not suffered to the same degree as other counties.	Depression in prices has existed for some 15 years, and is increasing.	Is not aware of any land having gone out of cultivation, but a great deal has been in hand. A local inquiry would be of little service.	Mr. J. F. L. Rolleston.
LINCOLN	N.E. and E. Lincolnshire. Depression exists.	Depression dates from 1876-77, and has increased in last two years.	Is not aware of any land having actually gone out of cultivation, but certain lands have gone into a partial and imperfect state of cultivation.	Mr. F. Higgins.
MIDDLESEX	Considerable depression exists	Depression has existed for 12 years.		Mr. G. H. Taylor.

Appendix D.

County.	Heads of Inquiry.			Inspector's Name.
	Does Agricultural Depression exist?	Is it long standing or recent? Is it increasing or decreasing?	Has any land gone out of Cultivation?	
ENGLAND—*cont.*				
MONMOUTH	*See* SOUTH WALES.			
NORFOLK	Depression exists to a very considerable extent.	Depression has continued with increasing force for the past 15 years.	No land out of cultivation, but large areas have been left in grass as sheep walks.	Mr. E. W. Beck.
NORTHAMPTON	Depression is very acute	Depression is of long standing and rapidly increasing.	Does not know of any land out of cultivation.	Mr. J. F. L. Rolleston.
NORTHUMBERLAND	Depression exists seriously	Depression is of long standing and increasing.	No land has gone out of cultivation; some has been laid to grass.	Mr. George Grey.
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	Depression exists	Depression has existed from 1880 to present time.	Is not aware of any land having gone out of cultivation, but the Duke of Portland has ceased to farm 1,000 acres of very light forest sand land.	Mr. F. J. Turner.
OXFORD	Depression exists, more seriously on arable farms.	Depression began in 1878, and arable farmers have not recovered ground.	No land out of cultivation, but some fields allowed to go to grass.	Mr. J. J. Harle.
RUTLAND	Depression exists in parts of the county.	Depression is increasing in parts.	No land out of cultivation	Mr. F. Higgins.
SALOP	Depression exists to a serious extent.	Depression has existed since 1879.	On poorer lands, especially clay loams, large acres have gone out of cultivation, and produce little beyond weeds.	Mr. H. J. Wyley.
SOMERSET	Depression exists	Depression commenced about 1877–78 and is not decreasing.	Is not aware of any land having gone out of cultivation. It is a question of rent.	Mr. J. W. Dymond.
STAFFORD	Depression exists, but is less intense in the dairy districts.	Depression was first felt with the fall in prices of grain and is increasing.	Is not aware of any land out of cultivation, but much land has been converted to pasture.	Mr. G. Mensies.
SUFFOLK	Depression exists	Depression is of long standing and increasing.	A good deal of land is out of cultivation.	Mr. J. Bird.
SURREY	Depression exists	Depression began in 1877–80 and is increasing.	A few fields roughly laid down to grass.	Mr. F. Reid
SUSSEX	Depression exists	Depression has existed since 1878 and is increasing.	No land out of cultivation, but land has been allowed to fall down to grass.	Mr. F. Reid.
WARWICK	Depression exists	Depression is of long standing and increasing.	Land has gone out of cultivation in his district.	Major W.T. E. Fosbery.
WESTMORLAND				
WILTS	Depression exists to a great extent.	Depression began about 1876 and is increasing.	Land has not been regularly cultivated owing to depression in prices.	Mr. C. Paterson.
WORCESTER	Depression exists to a serious extent.	Depression has existed since 1879.	On poorer lands, especially clay loams, large areas have gone out of cultivation.	Mr. H. J. Wyley.
YORK, NORTH RIDING	Depression exists. (Pretty general and strong feeling that sub-commissioner should visit the district.)	Depression has existed more or less for last 15 years.	Is not aware of any entire farms having gone out of cultivation, but there are cases where worst fields are no longer considered worth the cost of cultivating.	Mr. J. Rutherford.
YORK, EAST RIDING	Depression exists, but not seriously as in districts where the soil is heavy.	Depression has gradually become more intense and culminated in 1892, but keener inquiry for farms now (1893) than for past seven years.	Is not aware of any land having gone out of cultivation, but strong land is being laid down to grass.	Mr. D. Cayley.
YORK, WEST RIDING	Depression exists	Depression has existed since 1876, prices are still very low.	Is not aware of any land having gone out of cultivation.	Mr. J. Farrer.
WALES.				
NORTH WALES	Depression has existed, but there is now a slight improvement.	Depression commenced about 1879, but things are now turning slightly upwards.	No land out of cultivation	Mr. H. R. Hughes. Mr. W. B. C. Jones.
SOUTH WALES	Depression exists, especially in store cattle and mountain sheep trade. Great poverty amongst farmers in North Cardiganshire.	Depression began about 1879 and has become more acute during last few years owing to falling prices.	No land out of cultivation, but the land has been starved owing to the depression.	Mr. B. Forrest. Mr. H. C. Fryer. Mr. D. W. Drummond.
SCOTLAND.				
ABERDEEN	Depression exists	Depression began 12 to 15 years since, and there are few indications of any improvement.	Some land has gone out of rotation and has been laid down to pasture.	Mr. J. A. Beattie. Mr. A. Murray.
ARGYLL	Depression exists	Depression has existed since 1878–79, but few indications of improvement.	Land has been laid down to permanent pasture.	Mr. J. Ritchie.

Appendix D.

County.	Heads of Inquiry.			Inspector's Name.
	Does Agricultural Depression exist?	Is it long standing or recent? Is it increasing or decreasing?	Has any land gone out of Cultivation?	
SCOTLAND—*cont.*				
BANFF - - - -	Depression exists - -	Depression began in the Highlands as early as 1877.	Only a small area of poor land gone out of cultivation.	Mr. G. Gordon.
BERWICK - - -	Depression exists - -	Depression has existed since 1879; some signs of a decrease in the depression.	No land out of cultivation, but land has been laid down to grass.	Mr. J. Scott Dudgeon.
DUMBARTON - -	Depression exists - -	Depression has existed since 1878–79, but there are a few indications of improvement.	Land has been laid down to permanent pasture.	Mr. J. Scott Dudgeon.
DUMFRIES - - -	Depression exists - - -	Depression has existed since 1879; some signs of a decrease in the depression.	No land out of cultivation, but land has been laid down to grass.	Mr. J. Scott Dudgeon.
EDINBURGH - -	Depression does not exist -	Farms are more readily let now than eight to 10 years ago.	No land out of cultivation -	Mr. J. J. Davidson, (reports for suburban district of Midlothian only).
ELGIN, or MORAY - -	Depression exists - -	Depression began in the Highlands as early as 1877.	Only a small area of poor land gone out of cultivation.	Mr. G. Gordon.
FIFE - - -	Depression exists - -	Depression has existed for 10 or 12 years, but a slight improvement in demand for farms.	No land out of cultivation -	Mr. W. M. Stewart (reports for western portion of Fife).
FORFAR - - -	Depression exists - - -	Depression has existed during the past 15 years.	No land has gone out of cultivation, but land has been laid down to permanent pasture.	Mr. J. A. Beattie.
INVERNESS - -	Depression exists - -	Depression has existed during the past 15 years.	No land out of cultivation, but land has been laid down to permanent pasture.	Mr. J. A. Beattie.
" - - -	Depression exists - -	Present serious depression began about 5 years ago.	Large areas of inferior land left in permanent grass.	Mr. R. Black.
KINCARDINE - -	Depression exists - -	Depression has existed during the past 15 years.	No land out of cultivation; but land has been laid down to permanent pasture.	Mr. J. A. Beattie.
KIRKCUDBRIGHT -	No agricultural depression, strictly speaking, exists.	The late exceptionally favourable season has undoubtedly improved the position of agriculturists.	No land out of cultivation -	Mr. R. F. Dudgeon.
ORKNEY - - -	Depression exists - -	Depression has existed for three years, and is not increasing.	No land out of cultivation -	Mr. S. Leitch.
PERTH - - -	Depression exists - -	Depression has existed since 1878–79. Few indications of any improvement.	Land has been laid down to grass.	Mr. J. Ritchie.
ROSS and CROMARTY -	Depression exists - -	Depression has existed during the past 15 years.	No land out of cultivation, but land has been laid down to permanent pasture.	Mr. J. Beattie. Mr. R. Gordon.
ROXBURGH - -	Depression exists - -	Depression has existed since 1879; some signs of a decrease.	No land out of cultivation, but land has been laid down to grass.	Mr. J. Scott Dudgeon.
STIRLING - -	Depression exists - -	Depression has existed since 1878–79; few indications of improvement.	Land has been laid down to permanent pasture.	Mr. J. Ritchie.
ISLAY, JURA, COLONSAY	Depression exists - -	Depression has existed for nine years, and has increased.	No land has gone out of cultivation.	Mr. P. Reid.

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